AN

ADDRESS

TO

Dr. PRIESTLY.

AN

ADDRESS

TO

DR. PRIESTLEY.

AN

ADDRESS

TO

Dr. PRIESTLY,

UPON HIS

Doctrine of Philoſophical Neceſſity

Illuſtrated.

LONDON:

Printed for T. CADELL, in the STRAND.

M.DCC.LXXX.

ERRATUM.

P. 127. l. 18. for *antients* read *ancients*.

AN ADDRESS TO Dr. PRIESTLY, &c.

SIR,

IT was but lately, on account of ſome avocations, that an opportunity was afforded me of reading over your Treatiſe upon Neceſſity; which however I had for ſome time longed to accompliſh: as it was a ſubject, which I had much conſidered; and had indeed long ſince, for my private ſatisfaction, written down my thoughts upon it. When I did at laſt take your treatiſe in hand, I formed a reſolution not to be too haſty in my concluſions: but to read it over with that attention and care, which every thing deſerves, that proceeds from

a perſon ſo juſtly celebrated, as Dr. Prieſtly. It will be unneceſſary, and idle, to detain you with any further prefatory diſcourſe: on which account I ſhall only take the liberty of giving you this ſhort information at ſetting out, that I cannot by any means accede to the principles, which you lay down; nor abide by your concluſions. Upon the moſt diligent inquiry I am perſuaded, that mankind have a ſelf-determining power. That upon mature deliberation, and juſt reaſoning, they can make a free and proper election: and can not only chooſe, but reject, as ſhall ſeem beſt to their judgment. In ſhort they are not tied down by that abſolute *Neceſſity*, under which you lay them: nor are affected by that overbearing influence, and chain of cauſes, which according to your opinion have been irreſiſtibly operating from the very commencement of time. You ſay in the courſe of your treatiſe, that the Neceſſity, of which you treat, is not the Predeſtination of the *Calviniſts*, nor the Fate of the *Ancients:* (Preface, p. xxiii.) a circumſtance, which I ſhall not take upon me at preſent to controvert. This is certain upon your own evidence, through the whole courſe of your writing, however you may ſometimes ſoften

and qualify it, that the Neceſſity, of which you treat, is no other than fixed Fate, and unavoidable * Predeſtination.

SECTION I.

YOU may perhaps in ſome degree anſwer me, by ſaying, that at your very beginning, when you take in hand to treat of Liberty and Neceſſity; you give full ſcope to the powers of man: and allow him all the freedom that can be wiſhed, in reſpect both to thinking and acting. It muſt be confeſſed, that you do: but how this correſponds with your aſſertions afterwards, will be our future conſideration. It may be want of diſcernment on my ſide, which prevents my uniformly perceiving the force of your arguments: but to the beſt of my judgment, the conceſſions, which you make at the beginning, are inconſiſtent with what you ſay afterwards. They ſeem to be contradicted through the whole courſe of your treatiſe. However, as you aſſure us, that philoſophical neceſſity may be made to agree very well with human freedom, let us apply to your own words, where you firſt ſpeak upon the ſubject.

* See p. 162.

In the first place, I would observe, that I allow to man all the liberty or power, that is possible in itself, *and to which the ideas of mankind in general ever go*; *which is* the power of doing whatever they will or please, *both with respect to the operations of their minds, and the motions of their bodies, uncontrolled by any foreign principle or cause. Thus every man is at liberty to turn his thoughts to whatever subject he pleases, to consider the reasons for or against any scheme or proposition, and to reflect upon them as long as he shall think proper; as well as to walk wherever he pleases, and to do whatever his hands and other limbs are capable of doing.* p. 2. I pass over the passage, which you quote from Mr. Hobbes, as well as that from Mr. Wollaston. The latter gentleman, a person of great learning, was a strong advocate for human liberty, and has brought the clearest arguments in defence of it; and you tell us that you allow them, p. 3. Now, if I am not under an illusion, the whole seems to me a paradox: nor can I account for your making these concessions; as they seem so inconsistent with the principles, which you elsewhere maintain. And though you may with great ingenuity attenuate and soften, what you say, and make use of

many

many reſtrictions; yet I do not ſee, how you can abide by what you have allowed; and make any compromiſe between freedom and neceſſity. You acknowledge in your preface, that you have given up the doctrine of *liberty*. Pref. p. xxxi. And in another place you tell us, that *the two ſchemes of liberty and neceſſity admit of no medium between them.* p. 84. How can theſe jarring principles be made to agree?

As you have however in the paſſage above given your ſanction to human liberty; and allowed it its full force in reſpect both to thought and action, *uncontrolled by any foreign power*; let us ſee by what means it is, that you bring it afterwards under the thraldom of neceſſity: and how can you reconcile what you have ſaid in one place with that, which you maintain in another? It may poſſibly be want of perception in me; but after the conceſſions made about human liberty, I do not ſee what there is, of which you can poſſibly abridge it. Let us then, without any reſerve, have in the moſt clear and preciſe manner your opinion upon this ſubject. Your words are theſe.—*All the liberty, or rather power, that I ſay a man has not, is that* of doing ſeveral things, when all

the previous circumſtances *(including the* ſtate of his mind, *and his* views of things) *are preciſely the ſame.* p. 7. It may be, as I have before ſaid, a want of apprehenſion in me: but I cannot after repeatedly conſidering the premiſes, ſee the force of this argument. However let us follow you, as you proceed—" *What I contend for is, that, with the ſame ſtate of mind, the ſame ſtrength of any particular paſſion, for example, and the ſame views of things, as any object appearing equally deſirable, he would always, voluntarily, make the ſame choice, and come to the ſame determination. For inſtance, if I make any particular choice to-day, I ſhould have done the ſame yeſterday, and ſhall do the ſame to-morrow, provided there be no change in the ſtate of my mind reſpecting the object of my choice.* Permit me for to ſtop here for a minute, in order to remark, that I think it impoſſible for a perſon to be ſo preciſely in the ſame ſtate of mind and body, as is above deſcribed, after any interval of time. Beſides the mind is often ſo fickle, and circumſtances ſo indifferent, that we chooſe, as we ſay, at hazard, and with little or no conſideration. So that it is hardly credible, that the ſame thing ſhould be uniformly at different times the ſame object of our election. If an

hundred

hundred lottery tickets in a ſeries of numbers were laid before a perſon, void of all whim and prejudice, who was to chooſe one; he would with great indifference lay his hand upon that which might ſeem moſt readily to preſent itſelf. If the ſame were to be poſtponed for a day or two, it would be juſt an hundred to one, whether he made the ſame option. But in reality no mind is ſo conſtant, nor body ſo uniform, as to be at different intervals *preciſely the ſame.* p. 7. But ſhould we grant your premiſes, ſtill, if in the ſame circumſtances repeated a *man would always*, as you allow, *voluntarily make the ſame choice:* it is plain, that he would not do it neceſſarily; and muſt therefore be at all times in a ſtate of liberty. For though a perſon were to repeat the ſame action ever ſo often: yet if he does it voluntarily, he muſt be in reſpect to choice free. You can never from a voluntary act infer neceſſity.

I am ſorry for this interruption, and will now give the reader your farther elucidation of the premiſes.—*In other words, I maintain that there is* ſome fixed law of nature reſpecting the will *as well as the other powers of the mind, and every thing elſe in the conſtitution of nature; and*

that conſequently it is never determined without ſome real and apparent cauſe, foreign to itſelf, i. e. *without ſome motive of choice, or that motives influence us in ſome definite, and invariable manner: ſo that every volition, or choice, is conſtantly regulated, and determined, by what precedes it.* Permit me here to make a ſhort pauſe, and conſider what has been ſaid; for being rather ſhort-ſighted I am apt to overlook the clue, which ſhould lead me, and am ſoon loſt in a maze. As to *nature* and *the law of nature* I know not what to ſay about them. They ſeem to be terms, to which we have often recourſe by way of ſubterfuge, when we are treating of properties, for which we cannot account. But upon this I ſhall not dwell; as that which follows demands our immediate attention. For you aſſert, if I miſtake not, that the mind with all its powers, and particularly the will, *is never determined without ſome real or apparent cauſe, foreign to itſelf*. p. 8. Now I am as much at a loſs as I was before. For it ſeems impoſſible to make, what you ſay here, conſiſtent with that, which you maintained above. In this place the will, and the mind in general, muſt be determined by a foreign cauſe: if we look but ſix pages backward we find juſt the

contrary

contrary aſſerted—*viz.* that men are quite free to do, *whatever they will or pleaſe, both with reſpect to the operations of their own minds, and the motions of their bodies, uncontrolled by any foreign principle or cauſe.* p. 2. This ſeems to be an abſolute contradiction; but poſſibly as we go on we may have it cleared up. To proceed then.—*And this conſtant determination of mind according to the motives preſented to us, is all, that I mean by its neceſſary determination. This being admitted, there will be a neceſſary connection between all things paſt, preſent, and to come, in the way of proper* cauſe and effect, *as much in the intellectual as in the natural world; ſo that how little ſoever the bulk of mankind may be apprehenſive of it, or ſtaggered by it, according to the eſtabliſhed laws of nature,* no event could have been otherwiſe, than it has been, is, or is to be, *and therefore all things, paſt, preſent, and to come, are preciſely, what the Author of nature really intended them to be, and has made proviſion for.* p. 8. I take the liberty to make anſwer, that in reſpect to the Author of nature, I think that we often introduce him with too little reverence, and determine about his purpoſes too boldly. And it ſeems to me inexplicable, that this all-wiſe Being ſhould give

to

to man a full power of choice, which you allow, that he did: and that he ſhould at the ſame time lay him under an irreſiſtible influence, and render the gift uſeleſs and abortive.

SECTION II.

WE come now to your ſecond chapter, in which you try to enforce *the ſame doctrine from the conſideration of cauſe and effect.* We have perceived above, that the mind of man, which was ſaid to be quite at liberty either to chooſe or reject; and in all its operations free from any foreign power and impulſe, is at laſt tied down by a blind neceſſity, and is obliged to determine by an external overbearing influence: ſo that whatever has happened, could not have been otherwiſe, according to *the fixed laws of nature.* You go on to explain farther what you have before ſaid. You inform us, that there is a ſeries of parts, which are connected like the links of a chain: and that they neceſſarily follow one after another; and are dependent upon a firſt mover, whoſe original energy paſſes through the whole;—*ſo that unleſs the fundamental laws of the ſyſtem were changed, it would be impoſſible, that any event*

ſhould

ſhould have been otherwiſe, than it was; juſt as the preciſe place where a billiard-ball reſts is neceſſarily determined by the impulſe given at firſt, notwithſtanding its impinging againſt ever ſo many other balls, or the ſides of the table. p. 9, 10. I hope, I have not miſquoted your words, nor miſrepreſented your meaning. You go on to tell us, that *this chain of cauſes and effects cannot be broken, but by ſuch a proviſion in the conſtitution of nature, as that the ſame event ſhall not certainly follow the preceding circumſtances. In this caſe indeed it might be truly ſaid, that any particular event might have been otherwiſe than it was, there having been no certain proviſion in the laws of nature for determining it to be this rather than that. But then this event, not being preceded by any circumſtances, that determined it to be what it was, would be an effect without a cauſe. For a cauſe cannot be defined to be any thing but* ſuch previous circumſtances as are conſtantly followed by a certain effect; *the* conſtancy *of the reſult making us conclude, that there muſt be a* ſufficient reaſon *in the nature of the things why it ſhould be produced in thoſe circumſtances. So that in all caſes, if the reſult be different, either the circumſtances muſt have been different, or there were no circumſtances whatever*

correſponding

correſponding to the difference of the reſult; and conſequently the effect was without any cauſe at all. —*Theſe maxims are univerſal, being equally applicable to all things, that belong to the conſtitution of nature corporeal or mental,* &c. p. 10, 11. I muſt confeſs, that I do not perfectly underſtand this proceſs of your argument: however I quote at large; as it may meet with others, who are bleſſed with a better apprehenſion. The ſame manner of reaſoning is purſued, p. 13. *A particular determination of mind could not have been otherwiſe than it was, if the laws of nature reſpecting the mind be ſuch, as that the ſame determination ſhall conſtantly follow the ſame ſtate of mind, and the ſame views of things. And it could not be poſſible for any determination to have been otherwiſe than it has been, is, or is to be, unleſs the laws of nature had been ſuch, as that though both the ſtate of mind, and the views of things, were the ſame, the determination might or might not have taken place. But in this caſe the determination muſt have been an effect without a cauſe, becauſe in this caſe, as in that of the balance, there would have been* a change of ſituation without any previous change of circumſtances: *and there cannot be any other definition of an effect without a cauſe. The application of*

the

the term voluntary *to mental determinations cannot poſſibly make the leaſt difference in this caſe.*

If the laws of nature be ſuch as that in given circumſtances, I conſtantly make a definite choice, my conduct through life is determined by the Being who made me, and placed me in the circumſtances in which I firſt found myſelf. For the conſequence of the firſt given circumſtances was a definite voluntary determination, *which bringing me into other circumſtances was followed by another definite determination. Upon no ſcheme whatever can this chain of ſituations of mind, and conſequent mental determinations, or of cauſes and effects be broken*. Beſides if one effect might take place without a ſufficient cauſe, another, and all effects, might have been without a cauſe: which entirely takes away the* only argument *for the being of a God.* p. 14, 15. I would not willingly cavil: and I ſhould be ſorry to do any injuſtice to your arguments. I can perceive in them much labour and ſubtilty; but they confound rather than convince: ſo that, believe me good ſir, I ſcarcely know, where I am; or upon what ground I ſtand. I have been one while told,

* See p. 17. concerning this indiſſoluble chain of circumſtances and effects.

that

correſponding to the difference of the reſult; and conſequently the effect was without any cauſe at all. —*Theſe maxims are univerſal, being equally applicable to all things, that belong to the conſtitution of nature corporeal or mental,* &c. p. 10, 11. I muſt confeſs, that I do not perfectly underſtand this proceſs of your argument: however I quote at large; as it may meet with others, who are bleſſed with a better apprehenſion. The ſame manner of reaſoning is purſued, p. 13. *A particular determination of mind could not have been otherwiſe than it was, if the laws of nature reſpecting the mind be ſuch, as that the ſame determination ſhall conſtantly follow the ſame ſtate of mind, and the ſame views of things. And it could not be poſſible for any determination to have been otherwiſe than it has been, is, or is to be, unleſs the laws of nature had been ſuch, as that though both the ſtate of mind, and the views of things, were the ſame, the determination might or might not have taken place. But in this caſe the determination muſt have been an effect without a cauſe, becauſe in this caſe, as in that of the balance, there would have been* a change of ſituation without any previous change of circumſtances: *and there cannot be any other definition of an effect without a cauſe. The application of*

the

the term voluntary *to mental determinations cannot poſſibly make the leaſt difference in this caſe. If the laws of nature be ſuch as that in given circumſtances, I conſtantly make a definite choice, my conduct through life is determined by the Being who made me, and placed me in the circumſtances in which I firſt found myſelf. For the conſequence of the firſt given circumſtances was* a definite voluntary determination, *which bringing me into other circumſtances was followed by another definite determination. Upon no ſcheme whatever can this chain of ſituations of mind, and conſequent mental determinations, or of cauſes and effects be broken*. Beſides if one effect might take place without a ſufficient cauſe, another, and all effects, might have been without a cauſe: which entirely takes away the* only argument *for the being of a God.* p. 14, 15. I would not willingly cavil: and I ſhould be ſorry to do any injuſtice to your arguments. I can perceive in them much labour and ſubtilty; but they confound rather than convince: ſo that, believe me good ſir, I ſcarcely know, where I am; or upon what ground I ſtand. I have been one while told,

* See p. 17. concerning this indiſſoluble chain of circumſtances and effects.

that

that man has a power of doing, whatever he pleaſes, uncontrolled by any foreign principle or power, p. 2. You in a few pages after aſſure me, p. 8. that the mind and will is always determined by a cauſe *foreign* to itſelf. And you go on to prove this by various arguments, ſhewing in this very page, that no determination could have been otherwiſe than it *has been, or is:* for we are under poſitive decrees: and, though the term itſelf is kept out of ſight, in a ſtate of abſolute * predeſtination. Hence our will is ſubject to an unavoidable influence: and every thought antecedently determined. But when this has been thus ſettled, you ſeem ſomehow to compromiſe matters, and after all to allow to the mind ſome power of judging for itſelf: the reſult of which you term *a definite choice*; and *a definite voluntary determination*. By this, if I apprehend you right, is meant, that a man has a *partial* and *limited* power of election. But in another part of your work you aſſert, that *in the ſcheme of liberty and neceſſity there is no medium*. p. 84. How then can we admit of

* This towards the end is more evidently acknowledged. See the Doctrine of Philoſophical Neceſſity, p. 162.

this

this compromiſe? and by what means can theſe different aſſertions be rendered conſiſtent? After all that you have been ſo good as to explain, I am ſtill left to aſk, whether I am free or not free: for as to this qualifying medium I know not what to make of it; as you do not ſufficiently either define, or prove it: and at the ſame time it ſeems to militate againſt your own avowed principles. I therefore again requeſt to know in reſpect to my thoughts and actions, whether I am *voluntarily* or *neceſſarily* determined. To this you have in a manner antecedently replied: and ſeem to think, that there is an impropriety in the very ſtating of ſuch a queſtion. *It may perhaps help to clear up this matter to ſome perſons, to conſider, that* voluntary *is not oppoſed to* neceſſary, *but only to involuntary, and that nothing can be oppoſed to* neceſſary *but contingent*, p. 15.

Excuſe me, good ſir, for I would not without cauſe preſume to diſſent from you: but your diſtinction, unleſs my logic fails me, cannot be true. For what are we to underſtand by the word *contingent*, but ſomething caſual and fortuitous: ſomething, which proceeds from

from chance. But chance does not in reality exiſt, and the term ſhould be baniſhed from all philoſophical inquiries. Chance and contingency are quite oppoſite to your principles, who reduce all things, even our moſt airy thoughts, the wild flights of imagination, to the rigid rule of cauſe and effect. This contraſt therefore with ſubmiſſion cannot be admitted. And in reſpect to what you have ſaid, that voluntary is not oppoſed to *neceſſary*, but only to *involuntary*; what is involuntary but another word for neceſſary? They ſeem to me to be in a manner ſynonymous. Whatever we do involuntarily we do by neceſſity: and on the other hand, when we act voluntarily, we act freely: ſo that when we bring involuntary in oppoſition to voluntary, it is the ſame thing as oppoſing neceſſity to freedom. As the premiſes do not ſeem to be good, I paſs over the inferences, which are made from them: as well as your anſwer to ſome of your opponents, who have differed from you in opinion. Towards the concluſion you repeat, that there are motives, to which man is obliged to ſubmit; and *if in fact he never do act contrary to their influence, it can only be becauſe he has no power ſo to do: and therefore he is ſubject*

to

to an abſolute neceſſity, &c. p. 18. I mention this to ſhew after all your conceſſions the ultimate to which you bring us.

As the whole of your ſyſtem is founded upon the doctrine of cauſe and effect; it may be worth our while to conſider what you have been pleaſed to ſay further upon this ſubject. You maintain, that there is *a neceſſary connection between all things, paſt, preſent, and to come, in the way of proper cauſe and effect, as much in the intellectual, as in the natural world: ſo that how little ſoever the bulk of mankind may be apprehenſive of it, or ſtaggered by it; according to the eſtabliſhed laws of nature, no event could have been otherwiſe than it has been, is, or is to be.* p. 8. The like is again enforced p. 13—*It could not be poſſible for any determination to have been otherwiſe than it has, is, or is to be.* And further you ſay, that as a man acts at one time, ſo he would act at all times in the ſame circumſtances: *For inſtance, if I make any particular choice to-day, I ſhould have done the ſame yeſterday and ſhall do the ſame to-morrow, provided there be no change in my mind reſpecting the object of the choice.* p. 7. The limitation at the cloſe ſeems unneceſſary; becauſe there can be no

change in a mind, which is uniformly acted upon by the ſame foreign power. *For you maintain that there is a fixed law of nature reſpecting the will.* p. 7. The ſame influence muſt produce like effects: And you further intimate, p. 9. as well as in other places, that there was an original ſyſtem eſtabliſhed, and a primary impulſe given, upon which every thing depends; *and unleſs the fundamental laws of the ſyſtem were changed, it would be impoſſible, that any event ſhould have been otherwiſe than it was: juſt as the preciſe place, where a billiard-ball reſts, is neceſſarily determined by the impulſe given to it at firſt, notwithſtanding its impinging againſt ever ſo many balls, or the ſides of the table.* p. 10. You elſewhere take notice of a vaſt ſeries of events, which you term *an indiſſoluble chain of circumſtances and effects, ſo that nothing could have been otherwiſe than it is.* p. 17. All theſe events took their riſe from an original impulſe, which has been carried on for ages through the whole ſyſtem: and is termed *a law of nature.* Whatever therefore a perſon does at one time, he would in the ſame ſituation do at another: and as both ſituation and diſpoſition are determined by the ſame influence and law, which you at other times comprehend under the term neceſ-

ſity;

ſity; a man, if in the ſame ſituation, would after the greateſt interval of time act preciſely in the ſame manner. This, Sir, is your opinion: by which you endeavour to ſhew that the will is not free: and, as you preſume, that when the ſame objects are preſented, it would at all times make the ſame choice, you from hence conclude that it is under an unavoidable neceſſity. Theſe laws, and this neceſſity, extend to the phyſical as well as the moral and intellectual world. From theſe principles, which you lay down, that all in the ſame ſituation would after any interval act preciſely as they have done, it follows, that if the world were renewed, all the ſame occurrences would neceſſarily happen again. If after ever ſo many myriads of ages a man were formed in the ſame manner, and in the ſame circumſtances, as the perſon from whom we are all deſcended; he would act exactly as Adam is preſumed to have acted: he would have the ſame poſterity: they would travel over the ſame ground; find out the ſame arts at the ſame periods; and perform without the leaſt deviation all and every of thoſe things, which have been already performed. Every ſtep, they ſhould take, would be found the ſame: every look, every

turn, every involuntary geſture, would be repeated. The winds would blow with the ſame variation; the rain muſt fall to a drop, and even the thouſandth part of a drop, as it had done before. The very duſt, and the ſmalleſt motes, which float in any medium, would be in number and quality the ſame. For according to your principles the ſame original impulſe muſt be attended with the like conſequences. And if we allow a failure in the ſmalleſt degree, there muſt be ultimately an unavoidable difference through the whole arrangement. But ſuch difference is inconſiſtent with that primary influence, and that neceſſity which you maintain. There muſt therefore be a perfect ſimilarity throughout. Theſe are the neceſſary conſequences from your principles: but, I believe, nobody will be perſuaded, that this would ever obtain. Let any perſon, after he has ſigned his name, try to write it three or four times preciſely in the ſame manner; and ſee whether it perfectly accords. If he cannot do it, when he undertakes it with premeditation, he will hardly bring it to perfection, when he acts without deſign. Or let him walk an hundred yards, and then try to pace the ſame ground at the like intervals,

intervals, and in the ſame time. If he could not perform it immediately; he would not effect it at the diſtance of three days, or thirty days: much leſs after an interval of ages.

But granting that people in the ſame circumſtances would always act uniformly in the ſame manner: yet in reſpect to the mind and the freedom of choice, I do not ſee how they are at all affected. If I had full liberty to chooſe in one inſtance, I ſhould have the ſame in another; and even if I were to repeat it an hundred times. You inſiſt, that the repetition of the ſame act muſt be the effect of neceſſity. But if that, which I do, be the reſult of forecaſt and reaſon, it will at all times be an inſtance of my freedom in reſpect to election. We ſhould, in all the caſes ſuppoſed, be led by inducements; and thoſe inducements would ariſe from conſideration, and judgment: by which we ſhould be inclined to make our option. But you throughout make no diſtinction between inducement, and neceſſity; between inclination and force. Whenever we heſitate, deliberate, and chooſe, you think, we are impelled paſt all reſiſtance: and from

this freedom of election would infer a total want of liberty.

Let us ſtill farther conſider this ſeries of events, this indiſſoluble chain of cauſes, upon which your ſyſtem is founded. Theſe according to your principles are derived from a primary influence, which operates univerſally. This influence you think is never impeded; and the chain of cauſes never interrupted: ſo that the operations of our minds are by theſe means neceſſarily determined. Motive ariſes from motive: and one idea produces another; and this inevitably: ſo that the mind, as you affirm, has no determining power. But may I aſk, Sir, if you have ever conſidered the ſtate of ſleep? What connexion has the laſt idea of a man, when he ſinks at night into oblivion, with the firſt thought, which occurs to him upon his awaking in the morning? We have reaſon to think, that there is ſcarcely a revolution of four and twenty hours, but this indiſſoluble chain is interrupted. At the ſame ſeaſon the original impulſe muſt ceaſe, and can no longer operate upon the mental faculties. You will perhaps ſay, that men think in their ſleep, as is evident from their dreams. But

do

do all men dream? or if they do, what enſues, but a train of irregular and incoherent ideas, which are unconnected with one another, and quite independent of all foreign and remote influence. But ſetting theſe things aſide, have you conſidered the ſtate of perſons, who ſuffer a deliquium? during which there ſeems to be a total loſs of ſenſation. There have been inſtances of people drowned; who, before they have been recovered, have lain for hours in a ſtate of death, deprived of every vital faculty. Have you ever reflected upon perſons in ſuch a ſituation? In theſe inſtances the connexion ſpoken of muſt have been entirely broken off. If then the mind has no internal power of its own, by what means does it renew its train of thoughts; and how is it able to think again at all? The laſt idea, when it ſunk into forgetfulneſs, and the firſt, which occurred, when it languiſhed into day, cannot poſſibly have had any relation to each other. There has been a manifeſt breach in the chain: and the primary influence, if it exiſted, muſt have been in like manner interrupted. From whence then does the mind recover itſelf: and what impreſſion is it, which ſets the train of ideas in motion; and oftentimes brings the mind into the

ſame track of thinking? Is the influence from within or from without? It cannot be any external impulſe: for in theſe circumſtances no immediate operation of the ſenſes can make a perſon recur to events long paſt; and to prior affections, which the mind may poſſibly at ſuch ſeaſon recollect. The immediate impulſe of the ſenſes, and the ſurrounding objects, cannot bring this about. And as to original influence, of which you treat, and the chain of cauſes: there has been a ſtop put to the whole; and the connexion no longer ſubſiſts. This power of recollection muſt therefore be from within, and is undoubtedly owing to a peculiar energy of the mind; a power of ſelf-exertion: by which it is enabled to call up and arrange its ideas at pleaſure: and to determine upon them, as ſhall ſeem beſt. And in conſequence of this we may conclude, that the will is not under any arbitrary and blind influence; nor directed by neceſſity: but on the contrary there is a freedom of choice; which is oftentimes the reſult of long deliberation, and judgment.

But why need we go ſo far to find out, that in the ſeries of events ſo often mentioned, and in this lengthened chain of cauſes, there is nothing,

thing, which is neceſſarily coercive? You indeed tell me, Sir, that every thought is predetermined; and in every act of volition I am forcibly impelled: ſo that I could not in any inſtance have made my election otherwiſe than I have done. Every movement of the mind, you ſay, ariſes from a *preſſing uneaſineſs*. This theory may appear ſpecious: but it ſeems to run counter to all experience: and the contrary, if I miſtake not, is ſelf-evident. I ſit at this inſtant at my eaſe, in a calm and diſpaſſionate ſtate of mind; as you are pleaſed Sir, to recommend *. I perceive myſelf at full liberty: and know not of any external impulſe to determine me either in my thoughts or actions. I purpoſe to move: but antecedently examine, whether I am under any bias, or neceſſity: or directed by any foreign power. I find none. In the vaſt ſeries of cauſes, ſo often mentioned, I do not perceive one, that will have any ſhare in the effect, which I am about to produce. The whole originates in myſelf, whether I move my body; or my arm: or am content with extending a finger. The like appears in reſpect to my thoughts. I am here equally free; and among the various objects,

* See C. ix. p. 106.

which

which are ready at my call, I arbitrarily chooſe thoſe, to which my fancy leads me. You tell me, that every thought is an effect; and that it is connected with a prior idea, by which it was produced. I cannot ſee any ſuch uniform affinity or correſpondence: and to give a proof of my liberty and independence, I will for once expatiate freely, and produce a ſeries of unconnected ideas from my own imagination. I accordingly, without any preſſing uneaſineſs, think of a tree; of time; of the ocean; of darkneſs; of a cone; of truth; of a tower; of probability; of Therſites; of love; of Epidaurus; of Socrates; of a mite; of caſuiſtry; of the Iliad; of Otaheite; of Tenterden ſteeple; of a mole; of a mouſe-trap. In doing this I did not find, that I was reſtrained by any law of nature: or impelled by any foreign power. Nor can I at laſt perceive that theſe deſultory thoughts have the leaſt connexion with one another: much leſs with any prior ideas. You aſſure me, that they muſt unavoidably have a reference; and that they are dependent upon others, which have preceded. In ſhort according to your principles they aroſe ſo neceſſarily in my mind, that five days hence, or five years hence, in the ſame circumſtances,

cumſtances, and with the ſame diſpoſition, I ſhould infallibly make the very ſame choice. But this ſeems contrary to experience: for though I am as preciſely in the ſame circumſtances, as we can ſuppoſe any man to be; and likewiſe in the ſame diſpoſition of mind, yet, after an interval of a very few minutes, I am not able to go over the fourth part of this ſeries. And however cogent the neceſſity may be, I can recollect very little more than the mole and the mouſe-trap.

I ſhould think, nothing could more plainly ſhew, that your ſyſtem is not well grounded, than the power, which we ſo intimately experience of recollection, and reflexion. Inſtead of proceeding in a regular ſeries of ideas, I can at any time pauſe for a ſeaſon; and then revert abruptly to what has paſſed; and recapitulate my thoughts and actions, as far back, as memory will carry me. You will ſay, as uſual, that *there muſt be a motive for this.* We will grant that there may be: for inſtance a proſpect of future good, or immediate ſatisfaction. But this motive often ariſes at my will, and proceeds from my own boſom: where that faculty, that energy, is lodged; by which theſe effects are produced. What I

in

in this manner perform is my own act intirely; unconnected with any ſeries, for which you contend; and uninfluenced by any foreign power.

SECTION III.

YOUR third ſection contains—An argument for *Neceſſity* from the *Divine Preſcience*. In this among other things you aſſert, that *upon the doctrine of Philoſophical Liberty, the Divine Being could not poſſibly foreſee what would happen in his own creation: and therefore could not provide for it.* p. 19. In another place you ſpeak to the ſame purpoſe. *To all minds the pretelling of a contingent event is equally a matter of conjecture: conſequently even infinite knowledge makes no difference in this caſe. For* knowledge *ſuppoſes an* object, *which in this caſe does not* exiſt; *and therefore cannot be* known to exiſt. *If man be poſſeſſed of a power of proper* ſelf-determination, *the Deity himſelf cannot controll it (as far as he interferes, it is no ſelf-determination of the man) and if he does not* controll *it, he cannot foreſee it.* p. 21. Surely, Sir, this is very bold, even to a degree of raſhneſs: and at the ſame time your mode of reaſoning

ſoning ſeems to my judgment totally inconcluſive. It may, I think, be obviated by a thouſand circumſtances in common life. A child may determine to take a walk in a garden: and I may have a power of controlling his purpoſe. But how does my tacit, and quieſcent, power at all influence, or prevent, his ſelf-determination. But you intimate, that if I do not controll it (the child's purpoſe) I *cannot foreſee it.* This too is very ſtrange: for I cannot conceive how my not exerting one power takes away another. I ſow a field with wheat: and, if I pleaſed, I could make an alteration by ploughing it up and ſowing it with rye, or barley. But I cannot ſee how the mere power of varying my purpoſe can ruin that purpoſe, and hinder my hope and proſpect of a good harveſt. In ſhort you make no diſtinction between what the Deity can do, and what he really does: and you argue, as if power and performance were the ſame. You moreover in a parentheſis obſerve, that *as far as he* (the Deity) *interferes, it is no ſelf-determination of the man.* Moſt undoubtedly: If any perſon determines for him, it is not his own determination. This is a ſelf-evident truth, to which I readily ſubſcribe;

but

but I do not ſee how it makes for your purpoſe.

You however proceed to enforce your argument by the authority of Mr. Hobbes, by whom you think the affair has been ſatisfactorily ſtated. *Denying Neceſſity*, ſays this writer (Works, p. 485) *deſtroys both the decrees and preſcience of Almighty God. For whatever God has purpoſed to bring to paſs by man, as an inſtrument, or foreſees ſhall come to paſs, a man if he has liberty, might fruſtrate, and make not come to paſs; and God ſhould either not foreknow it, and not decree it; or he ſhall foreknow ſuch things ſhall be, as ſhall never be, and decree what ſhall never come to paſs.* What a raſh, contemptible and ſhort-ſighted reptile is man! Who would think that this inſect of a day would preſume to limit omniſcience, and controul the powers of the Almighty? Bold and inconſiderate! to form a judgment of the divine energy by his own ſcanty faculties; and endeavour to reduce his Creator to the ſtandard of man. Beſides, what a round of abſurdity is there in this weak and impious ſuppoſition? One would imagine, that none but an idiot could have ſtated ſuch a caſe, wherein things

are

are ſuppoſed to be foreknown, which *ſhall never be*; and things decreed in conſequence of fore-knowledge which *ſhall never come to paſs*: is ſhort where it is ſaid, that what God foreſees is not foreſeen: for it may be *fruſtrated* by man, and rendered ineffectual. This, Sir, is the argument, which you think is *clearly ſtated*.

The experience, which we gain from our ſenſes comes to us by different inlets, and through a neutral medium; ſo that we are never intimately acquainted with the objects, from which our notices proceed. In the operations of the mind, and the proceſs of reaſoning, we are obliged to collate and compare our ſeveral ideas; and go through a train of inferences and deductions: and oftentimes it is not till after a long and painful inveſtigation that we at laſt arrive at the truth. But, my good Sir, can you poſſibly think, that the knowledge of the Almighty is obtained in this ſervile and precarious manner? and that his wiſdom proceeds after the human mode of reaſoning? You may as well, like the Anthropomorphites, aſcribe to him the eyes of a man to get intelligence, and human

limbs to perform his high operations. You tell us, that there has been from the beginning an indiſſoluble chain of connected events: a ſeries of cauſes and effects: and theſe produced by an unavoidable neceſſity, and an irreſiſtible influence: *ſo that nothing could have been otherwiſe than it is.* p. 17. And if this be not, as you aſſert; there can be no preſcience in God: for by theſe means and theſe only, he is enabled to foreſee. There cannot poſſibly be any other way, by which this attribute can be exerted. Now, Sir, I ſhould be very unwilling to be guilty of any diſreſpect towards you; and to make uſe of any harſh expreſſion. But ſurely you are highly preſumptuous: not to ſay ſelf-ſufficient. How can you limited as you are in your faculties, and every way finite and imperfect, pretend to determine about divine intelligence? to aſſert, that if the Deity does not foreſee things by the means, which you preſcribe; that he cannot have any foreſight at all? You tell me, that you believe in the ſcriptures; and I preſume, that you are ſincere. Do not you then know, that *the wiſdom of man is fooliſhneſs with God.* 1 Cor. iii. 19. that *his ways are higher than our ways; and his thoughts, than our thoughts?*

thoughts? Iſaiah lv. 9. *To whom then will ye liken me, and ſhall I be equal, ſaith the Holy one?* Iſaiah xl. 25. *Haſt thou not known, haſt thou not heard, that the everlaſting Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no ſearching of his underſtanding.* Iſaiah xl. 28. *Thy righteouſneſs*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *ſtandeth like the great mountains: thy judgments are like the great deep.* Pſalm xxxvi. 6. *Who hath directed the ſpirit of the Lord?—Who inſtructed, and taught him in the path of judgment,—and ſhewed him the way of underſtanding?* Iſaiah xl. 13. 14. This laſt, Sir, I am ſorry to ſay, is the part, which you have taken by pretending to preſcribe to the Deity. You have joined yourſelf with thoſe, who ſay,—*How doth God know, and is there wiſdom in the Moſt-High?* Pſalm lxxiii. 11. *And thou ſayeſt, How doth God know? Can he judge through the dark cloud?* Job xxii. 13. In what manner does the ſame ſacred writer finally determine this point? Attend, Sir, for he ſettles the whole in theſe few, but important, words. *He beholdeth all high things. He is a king over all the children of pride.* Job xli. 34. From the quotations above given, we may learn to humble ourſelves, when we ſpeak of our Creator; and

to mention his divine attributes with reverence. If his judgments and counſels be like the *great deep*, they are paſt our ability to fathom. Beſides, Sir, if I may be permitted to ſpeak to you with freedom, there ſeems to be a fundamental miſtake, that runs through your long courſe of arguing; by which your whole ſyſtem is affected. We have heard you ſpeak of cauſe and effect; of motive and influence; alſo of a chain of cauſes, and a long train of connexions, which have reached downwards from the commencement of things. Now we will grant, that in the tide of time there has been a long ſeries of events; that they have followed one another in an uniform ſucceſſion, and after an interval of many ages they are at laſt come down to us. Let all this be in ſome degree * allowed: yet when once we become engaged in the ſeries; we are not totally paſſive, and impotently driven on like the waves in a ſtream: *velut unda ſupervenit undâ:* nor are we blindly impelled like *a ball at a billiard-table.* We take a ſhare in this train of events; and as

* We may allow, but with ſome limitation, that every cauſe has been effect and every effect a cauſe. This in general may be granted in reſpect to the common occurrences in life. But connexion does not prove neceſſity.

far

far as our influence reaches, they are carried on in great meaſure according to our own purpoſes; and in conſequence of our will and judgment. And in reſpect to motives and incitements, we can often either ſubmit to them, or oppoſe them; according as it may appear to us beſt upon due conſideration. This power we manifeſtly experience: we feel it intimately. You too are obliged to own it, though you deny it afterwards: and endeavour to make it void. But all the theory in the world is nothing, when oppoſed to experimental knowledge. You err in this: you make no diſtinction between a cauſe, and an irreſiſtible influence; between a ſimple motive, and a cogent force; between connexion and neceſſity. You do not conſider, that in the ſeries, of which you treat, many things may have been conſequential, and by no means neceſſary. They might have been varied at the will of man; however you may diſallow it: and a different train of things might have been propagated, without any impeachment of the preſcience of God.

You proceed to tell us, *that many of the moſt zealous advocates for the doctrine of philoſophical*

liberty, aware of its inconſiſtency with the doctrine of the divine preſcience, have not ſcrupled to give up the latter altogether. They muſt then give up the ſcriptures at the ſame time: and with the ſcriptures their religion and faith. For in the ſacred writings the foreknowledge of the Deity is not only inculcated as a doctrine, but proved by a variety of events. *With reſpect to ſuch perſons,* you ſay, *I can only repeat what I have ſaid upon this ſubject in my examination of the writings of Dr. Beattie:* p. 173. And here I muſt obſerve, that you yourſelf deny this great attribute except upon your own principles: and thoſe, who do not admit your principles, you ſuppoſe equally to deny it. But ſurely this is injurious, and not agreeable to truth. Let us however ſee, what you ſay upon this head to Dr. Beattie. *Thus our Author, in the blind rage of diſputation heſitates not to deprive the ever-bleſſed God of that very attribute, by which in the books of Scripture he expreſsly diſtinguiſhes himſelf from all falſe gods: and than which nothing can be more eſſentially neceſſary to the government of the univerſe, rather than relinquiſh his fond claim to the fancied privilege of ſelf-determination: a claim, which appears to me, to be juſt as abſurd, as that of ſelf-exiſtence,*

and

and which could not poſſibly do him any good, if he had it.

What is more extraordinary, this power he arrogates to himſelf without pretending to advance a ſingle rational argument in favour of his claim; but expects it will be admitted on the authority of his inſtinctive common ſenſe only. And yet if a man expreſs the leaſt indignation at ſuch new and unheard of arrogance, and in an argument of ſuch importance as this, what exclamation and abuſe muſt he not expect?

As to Dr. Beattie's argument, I muſt leave it to his own management and ſkill to be defended. In reſpect to the gentleman himſelf I can only ſay, that I am not totally unacquainted with him: and he appears to be a perſon of conſummate goodneſs and candour: and of great elegance and erudition, and he is ſo deſcribed by all, who have the happineſs more intimately to know him. I cannot therefore conceive, how he could deſerve ſo ſevere a cenſure. For in truth theſe are cruel allegations: and upon the faireſt computation amount to little leſs than *ignorance*, *arrogance*, and *impiety*. And after all I do not find, that

he has denied any thing but your premiſes; which has brought upon him this heavy charge. You might upon the ſame principles ſtile him an atheiſt, and make him deny his Creator. But let us ſtop here; and it were well, if we could draw a veil over what has preceded, that it might be had no more in remembrance.

You may perhaps aſk me, *if the divine preſcience does not depend upon the cauſes which you have allotted, from whence does it ariſe?* In truth I do not preſume to judge. It is a wonderful attribute; far, very far, above my comprehenſion. I cannot account for the primary affections of my own mind: I cannot tell why I ſtretch out my arm: and believe me, Sir, with ſubmiſſion, you are equally in the dark. Yet you, who do not know the ſecret workings of your own boſom, pretend to direct Omniſcience.

SECTION IV.

YOUR fourth ſection is concerning the cauſe of volition, and the nature of the will. In this, Sir, you labour to ſhew in a very

very ample manner, that there is an analogy in all operations; and that as a ſtone tends to the ground by the force of gravity, and as the planets *are all retained in their orbits by powers that draw them towards the centers of their reſpective motions*, p. 25, ſo the will is under its particular influences; and is determined accordingly: and you proceed for ſome pages in a courſe of illuſtration to this purpoſe: and at laſt tell us, that *it cannot but be allowed by the moſt ſtrenuous advocates for metaphyſical liberty, that* * *motives have ſome real influence upon the mind.* p. 31. I ſhould think, Sir, that you have expended more labour, than was requiſite. Who ever aſſerted, that the mind was never under an influence; and, that the will was not determined by motives. The great point in queſtion you keep out of ſight; and yet in the concluſion you make your inferences, as if it had been ſatisfactorily proved. You in this place, as in many others, ſpeak of influ-

* So again, p. 33. *Let a man uſe what words he pleaſes, he can have no more conception how we can ſometimes be determined by motives, and ſometimes without any motive, than he can of a ſcale being ſometimes weighed down by weights, and ſometimes by a kind of ſubſtance, which has no weight at all, which whatever it be in itſelf muſt in reſpect to the ſcale be nothing.*

ence and motives indefinitely: but the great queſtion is, whether theſe motives are coercive: whether this influence be irreſiſtible; ſo that the mind has no power of election, and cannot by any means reject. You add, *It would be too manifeſt a contradiction to all experience, to aſſert that all objects are indifferent to us, that there is nothing in any of them, that can excite deſire or averſion, or that deſire or averſion have no influence upon the will, and do not incline us to decide on what is propoſed to us.* Here again the chief point to be diſcuſſed is kept from us. The queſtion is not, whether motives may not *incline* us: but whether they do not always force us. You have all along contended, that the mind is under an abſolute neceſſity: that the will is always predetermined, and has been ſo from the beginning; being inflexibly directed to one point: and now you ſeem to ſay, that it is only inclined. The thing, which you here aſk, is univerſally granted. We all know and allow that the mind may be inclined: but we think that we are at liberty to reſiſt the inclination. We contend, that we have a power of choice: and however preſſing the motive, that we can act againſt the grain: and that judgment will often

often get the better of external influence. Thus, though eagerly preſſed, I can refuſe food, which would prove my bane and ruin. I can reſiſt illicit pleaſure by a painful ſelf-denial. You will tell me, that this is owing to a ſtronger motive; which overcomes the weaker. This I ſhall not controvert. All I know is, that whatever influences there may be, we are bleſſed with reaſon, to conſider and to judge: and with a power to reject or to chooſe. It is enjoined us in Scripture to keep judgment, to do juſtice, and to determine according to right: alſo *to prove all things, and hold faſt that which is good.* 1. Theſſ. v. 21. But injunctions of this ſort would be quite unneceſſary, if our will were predetermined. We therefore claim, not a metaphyſical liberty, but a real power; by which we are enabled to judge and to diſtinguiſh; and to employ all the faculties, with which we are bleſſed. This power is under no blind and neceſſary controll, but attended with an energy of its own, which we intimately feel: and of which we are experimentally certain. What is once paſt, is fixed, and not to be recalled. But before any thing is determined, we have it often in our power to alter our ſchemes, and to vary our purpoſes

a thouſand

a thouſand ways. There may be influences and motives to incline us: but inſtead of merely looking back upon the paſt, let us look forward; and amid the numberleſs invitations to thought and to action, conſider, whether there be any irreſiſtible influence, that overpowers our reaſon, and abridges us of a free choice. Where things are rather indifferent, the liberty for which I contend, will more plainly appear. When a fair proſpect diſcloſes itſelf to any perſon, let him aſk himſelf, whether he be under any abſolute controll, when he directs his eyes to any object: and whether any law of nature, or law of fate; or laſtly any abſolute neceſſity, directs him ſolely to one point; and prevents his expatiating freely. Let him inquire of his own heart, when he did one thing, whether he could not have done another? And if he could with the ſame facility have turned to another object of operation; then there was no abſolute neceſſity for things being as they are. There was a poſſibility of their being otherwiſe. Theſe truths come immediately under our cognizance; they are proved from repeated experience. Therefore, as I before have urged, all the fine-ſpun theory in the world, amounts

to

to nothing, when oppoſed to experimental certainty. You will therefore excuſe me, if I ſay nothing about things *automatic and ſecondarily automatic*; of things *ſecondarily automatic ſhortened*, and *ſecondarily automatic extended*. p. 41. 42. I may perhaps be greatly to be blamed for not underſtanding your arguments: but indeed they are too abſtruſe for me: I confeſs, that I do not comprehend them. I therefore with your permiſſion will leave them to perſons of greater ſagacity: and conclude with this theorem—that *though things are, as they are, yet they might have been otherwiſe*.

SECTION V.

THE fifth Section is concerning the ſuppoſed conſciouſneſs of Liberty, and the uſe of the term Agent.

This part of your Treatiſe is for the moſt part calculated to anſwer the objections of Dr. Price: in which I do not think myſelf neceſſarily concerned: and therefore ſhall not meddle with this ſeries of altercation: eſpecially as I have ſo lately given my opinion upon this head; which needs not be here recapitulated. And

as

as to the diſpute, Sir, between Dr. Price and yourſelf, whether it be motive or man, which is the agent; I muſt leave it as I find it. You ſeem to proceed upon your old principle of a chain of cauſes, influencing from the beginning of time: concerning which we have already explained ourſelves ſufficiently. In ſhort you think, that we are always impelled by ſomething from behind; and never led by any thing before us. But believe me, we are more influenced by the preſent, than by the paſt: and what is to come is not without its conſideration.

SECTION VI.

THIS part of your diſcourſe, like the former, contains an altercation between you and your antagoniſt Dr. Price; but is of greater conſideration than the foregoing. Yet what you urge here, relates not always to the point in general, but to the particular opinion of your opponent. This gentleman inſiſts with good reaſon, that *Liberty is eſſential to practical virtue:* and that a Being, which is under a foreign and neceſſary influence; is not accountable for his actions, or thoughts: nor

can

can he be ſaid to act virtuouſly or viciouſly. He muſt be a free agent, and act for himſelf in order to be anſwerable for what he does. And in this, Dr. Price ſays, there is no medium; nor compromiſe: and you have ſaid ſo yourſelf. Hence the Doctor's inference—*Who muſt not feel the abſurdity of ſaying—I determine voluntarily, and yet neceſſarily?* Your anſwer, Sir, to this, is, I think, by no means ſatisfactory. It is as follows. p. 57. *Here we have the ſame arbitrary account of agency, that has been conſidered before. For this is the very ſame whether the object of choice be of a moral nature, or not, whether it relates to different kinds of fruit, or to virtuous or vicious actions. In fact, if a virtuous reſolution be formed, the perſon by whom it is formed, is the object of my complacence and regard: and if a vicious choice be made, the perſon is the object of my abhorrence, and there is the greateſt uſe and propriety in puniſhing him.* Believe me, Sir, you would in doing ſo act with the greateſt injuſtice. For if this perſon is under an abſolute neceſſity, directed and forced by a foreign impulſe, as you have abundantly inſiſted, he cannot be accountable for what he does. You may diſpute about agent and agency; and ſtrive to evade the argument:

gument: but the poſition is plain, that we cannot *determine voluntarily and yet neceſſarily.* If our will and determination be, as you inſiſt, under a foreign irreſiſtible influence, the conſequences, which reſult from them, be they good, or be they bad, cannot be placed to our account. You ſpeak of a *virtuous reſolution being formed,* and of the perſon, who formed it, being entitled to *your regard.* But, pardon me, Sir, you beg the queſtion. The very thing in diſpute is, whether a perſon under an overpowering influence does form his own reſolutions, and whether he is any more anſwerable for what is done, than the ſword of juſtice directed by the executioner; or the dagger by the hand of the ruffian.

In p. 60. Dr. Price makes mention of a moral neceſſity in oppoſition to the natural neceſſity maintained by you: which he ſeems to make ariſe from a conſcience and conviction within, and not from any external force, nor lengthened chain of cauſes. How true this may be, I ſhall not contend. He adds, *the more efficacious and unconquerable the influence of conſcience is within a perſon, the more amiable we muſt think him.* p. 61. Upon this you

make a comment. But it were to be wiſhed, that you had endeavoured to elucidate the great truths, in which we are all concerned, from ſome more general principles, and not from the particular opinion of a ſingle perſon. The world may not perhaps agree with Dr. Price, any more than with Dr. Prieſtly; though they may both in many reſpects be entitled to its juſt eſteem and regard. However you urge in conſequence of this the certainty of your own poſitions. *It is plain therefore, that when Dr. Price does not uſe the language of a ſyſtem, a full conſent of the will, though produced by the efficacious and unconquerable influence of conſcience, that is of motives, is ſufficient to conſtitute virtue. Here therefore we ſee the moſt perfect virtue ariſing from the moſt abſolute neceſſity, that is, if there be any meaning in words, virtue, without a poſſibility of man's acting otherwiſe than he does*— p. 63. How is it poſſible, good Sir, in this inſtance thus to deceive yourſelf? Or are you in reality deceived: and not rather carried on by prejudice in a caſe ſo plain? Where is it ſaid, that the dictates of conſcience are irreſiſtible: and that whoever liſtens to them, is under an *unconquerable influence*, and an *abſolute neceſſity?*

neceſſity? Do we not know, that people oftentimes exclude the light, and act contrary to reaſon? And do not the ſacred writers ſpeak of the conſciences of men bearing witneſs againſt them; ſometimes accuſing, and at other times excuſing them, accordingly as they act more or leſs in conformity to the truth? See Romans, c. ii. v. 15. Dr. Price, ſpeaking in the comparative degree, makes uſe of this mode of expreſſing himſelf—*The more efficacious and* UNCONQUERABLE *the influence of conſcience is within him* (i. e. any perſon) *the more amiable we muſt think him.* If in this inſtance he has made uſe of a term too ſtrong; the world ſhould not be amuſed with inferences drawn from thence; eſpecially if they are contrary to his expreſs meaning; as at firſt ſight will plainly appear. It is by no means fair to ſet aſide the context, and to argue from a ſingle word: which after all you in a great degree pervert; and apply in a different, and even in an oppoſite, ſignification. By an influence more *efficacious*, and more *unconquerable*, he only means, the more *irreſiſtible the influence is*, and the more determinately a man gives himſelf up to it, the greater is his merit: plainly intimating, that conſcience, ſo far from being abſolutely coercive,

may

may be more or less efficacious: and likewise may oftentimes be resisted and even conquered. That this is the sense of the words may be seen from all that precedes; as you have quoted from him. And though this is too manifest to be mistaken; yet you take an unfair advantage of this strong expression; and insist that he makes virtue depend upon an *unconquerable* influence *: and that according to him the most perfect virtue may arise from the most *absolute necessity*. Whereas he tells you the express contrary; and uniformly asserts, that our actions are free; and that liberty is essential to practical virtue. See p. 56. I should therefore be afraid, that you have in this instance forgot yourself; and not acted with that sincerity, which the world may have expected from you. Yet you boldly conclude, *If this be not a just inferente, I do not know what is.* I fear this declaration will not be to your advantage in the opinion of your adversary. He will think, it affects either your head, or your heart.

In the course of your Treatise we are brought to some very critical and interesting arguments,

* By *the more unconquerable* he plainly means *the less liable to be conquered.*

of Dr. Price, upon which the whole ſeems to turn. To theſe we have reaſon to expect a very preciſe and determinate anſwer. I have not ſeen, what this gentleman has written; ſo I both here, and elſewhere, copy his words, as I find them quoted by you. *It has always been the general, and it has evidently been the natural, ſenſe of mankind, that they cannot be accountable for what they have no power to avoid. Nothing can be more glaringly abſurd than applauding, or reproaching ourſelves, for what we were no more the cauſe of, than of our own beings, and what it was no more poſſible for us to prevent, than the return of the ſeaſons, or the revolutions of the planets.* p. 64. In ſhort the Author would fain know, what room there is for merit or blame; if all our actions proceed from neceſſity and force? His arguments are ſtated very fairly and conciſely: let us ſee, how you reconcile theſe things upon your principles: how do you make virtue conſiſtent with neceſſity? How can man be accountable, if he is under a conſtant and irreſiſtible influence? Your whole ſyſtem depends upon your anſwer: which is in the following words. *This is ſo expreſſed, as if the diſpoſition of mind, which is one neceſſary cauſe of men's reſolutions and actions, was*

not at all concerned. But taking in this circumſtance, to which Dr. Price allows a certain and neceſſary operation, that which he calls a glaring abſurdity is preciſely his own principle; unleſs he will ſay, &c. Surely, my good Sir, this muſt appear very evaſive. The world does not want to be engaged in your cavils with the Author, but expects a preciſe anſwer; and to have theſe difficulties reconciled. How can you with any juſtice avail yourſelf of the ſuppoſition that the mind's diſpoſition is not included, or concerned in Dr. Price's argument? Beſides what are we to underſtand by the terms *diſpoſition of mind*, but a *mind diſpoſed?* And if the mind of a man is at all diſpoſed, there muſt have been ſomething which diſpoſed it. And as you uniformly through your whole treatiſe inſiſt, that every thing is produced by ſome motive from without: that every thought, word, and action is determined by neceſſity: the mind according to your principles muſt be under the ſame influence, and directed by the ſame power. For according to your repeated opinion, *no event*, neither thought, word, nor deed, *could have been otherwiſe than it was, is, or is to be.* p. 8. If then the mind, as you ſay, be diſpoſed by neceſſity, aſcribe what you

pleaſe to the diſpoſition of it, ſtill our thoughts and our will are no longer our own; no more, than any of the conſequences, which reſult from them. This you have tried to inculcate continually. Hence then ariſes Dr. Price's inference in conſequence of your principles,—*that men cannot be accountable for what they have no power to avoid:* and that according to your ſyſtem, *we can neither applaud nor reproach ourſelves for any thing we do: as* we are no more *the cauſe of our own actions than of our own being.* p. 64. Here then is the great point, which demands an immediate anſwer: all which you ſeem to evade: and only tell us that Dr. Price has not conſidered, or does not ſeem to have conſidered—*diſpoſition of mind.* But what the leaſt authority have you for ſuch an arbitrary ſuppoſition? Beſides is not the mind, according to your own doctrine, diſpoſed and impelled by the ſame unavoidable influence, by which all other things are driven? Do not you aſſert that the will, and conſequently every thing relating to it, is under a foreign power? Tell us then in a word, how are we upon your principles accountable for any thing, which we do? Do not ſeduce me from the matter in hand by an account of any perſon's abſurdity

and

and contradictions: but anſwer to the purpoſe: how can we upon the principle of neceſſity be entitled to either reward or puniſhment? You anſwer not: but enter into diſpute with Dr. Price; giving up the point in queſtion; and at the ſame time giving up your whole ſyſtem. What follows conſiſts for the moſt part of the diſpute with the ſame perſon carried on through ſeveral pages. Towards the cloſe, though you have not afforded any proof for the truth of your principles, yet you ſtill perſiſt in them: and aſſert again, that the will is determined by the *diſpoſition of the mind:* which you ſay is a *neceſſary determination.* p. 72. You mention, that *mankind in general do not refine ſo much as Dr. Price: and Dr. Price prays like other Chriſtians and with the humility of a Neceſſarian.* You add, *I wiſh Dr. Price would conſider*—and *I alſo wiſh Dr. Price would conſider,* &c. p. 69. 70. 71. But as I know not what this gentleman has written, nor what occaſion there may be for this reconſideration, I muſt paſs by what is ſaid upon the occaſion; for I am treated with what I do not want; and am diſappointed of that, which I expected.

SECTION VII.

YOU here treat of the propriety of *rewards and puniſhments*, and the foundation of *praiſe* and *blame*, on the ſcheme of *Neceſſity*. This has before been the ſubject of debate: but nothing ſatisfactory was afforded by you to ſhew the propriety here ſpoken of. What we have hitherto been deprived of, we hope, Sir, will now be in an ample manner explained. You begin in the following manner. *The objection to the doctrine of neceſſity that has weighed the moſt with thoſe, who have conſidered the ſubject, is that, if men's determinations and actions flow neceſſarily from the previous ſtate of their minds, and the motives or influences, to which they are expoſed, the idea of reſponſibility, or accountableneſs, vaniſhes, and there can be no propriety, or uſe, of rewards or puniſhments.* p. 73. You will be ſo good as to excuſe me, if I think, that this is by no means fairly ſtated. You ſoften and extenuate the ſuppoſed objection by means of ambiguous terms; of which you afterwards take an undue advantage. You are apt to ſpeak in general where you ſhould be particular: and in particular, where you ſhould be general.

Thoſe,

Thoſe, to whom you allude, do not found their objections upon any diſpoſition of man's mind, nor upon the influence and motives, to which it is liable, as you are pleaſed to ſurmiſe. They allow that virtue may ariſe from influence, and morality from motives: and praiſe and reward may in conſequence of it be juſtly afforded. But they object to abſolute neceſſity; by which every thing, according to your principles, *muſt have been as it is*: and could not poſſibly have been otherwiſe. They object to that overbearing influence, to thoſe irreſiſtible motives, which you maintain: ſuch as operate ſo ſtrongly, that the mind through its whole progreſs is blindly driven on in all its various directions, like a *ball upon a billiard-table*. This is the principle, to which they object: It is no other than abſolute neceſſity; p. 18. in other words, fixed fate: which you now keep out of ſight, and in the room of it ſubſtitute *diſpoſition*, and *ſtate of mind*. What your opponents inſiſt upon is this; that where a perſon is not his own maſter, he is not reſponſible for his actions: and where a man is not accountable for his actions, he cannot juſtly be liable either to reward or puniſhment. This is the point, upon which they found their

objection. To my judgment you ſeem, Sir, often to ſpeak with too great a latitude; as in the paſſage above, when you mention indeterminately—*motives*. Now there are two ſorts of motives; by which the will is diſpoſed: the one aſſumed by you, which is ſuppoſed to be entirely from without, and to originate in a cogent neceſſity: The other ſort is internal, and though it may ariſe from different objects, yet it is not compulſatory, nor does it neceſſarily oblige us, there being always room left for reaſoning and judgment; and conſequently for determination and choice. Man is endowed with a rational faculty, by which he is taught, when premiſes are laid before him, to compare, and to diſtinguiſh; and to make his election accordingly. If he chooſes well, and acts up to the truth, he deſerves praiſe. But if he either makes a wrong election through prejudice and wilful blindneſs; or if he ſees the truth plainly and will not act up to the knowledge afforded him; he then is culpable: becauſe he refuſes the light offered, and abuſes the beſt of gifts. This power of the mind, which we experimentally know to exiſt; and its conſequences, with which we are intimately acquainted, ſeem by you to be ſet aſide; or at

leaſt

leaſt to be kept out of ſight. It is true, at your firſt ſetting out you make large conceſſions, and allow to men a liberty of thinking and of acting, as they pleaſe. p. 2. But you afterwards overturn the whole; and tell us, that every thing has been eſtabliſhed by abſolute decrees from the beginning; that we are all neceſſarily directed: and conſequently that there is no room for election; as all, that we do, is unalterably determined: and nothing *could be otherwiſe than it has been, or is.* How the power above granted is conſiſtent with theſe principles, you never have, nor can, make out. In ſhort you give liberty, and take it away. You allow it in five or ſix lines; and deny it for an hundred pages. The whole of your treatiſe is contrary to your firſt determination. And as you proceed uniformly upon this notion of an inevitable neceſſity, and thoſe, who differ from you do not allow any ſuch influence; you often ſuppoſe them to ſet aſide all influence whatever; and that they do not allow any motive to either thought or action. Hence p. 85. you mention the abſurdity of imagining a will acting *independently of any motive:* that *virtue without any motive would not be virtue.* You have likewiſe many quotations from

Mr.

Mr. Hume and others to this purpoſe. As if thoſe who do not allow the influence, upon which you inſiſt, ſet aſide all influence whatever. This aſſumption is not fair: and your inferences in conſequence of it by no means true.

You however proceed, Sir, to enforce your doctrine by other means: and aſſure us, that *there can be no uſe or propriety of rewards or puniſhments on any other ſcheme; but the greateſt poſſible upon this* of neceſſity, p. 74. *In order to make this clearly apprehended, let us ſuppoſe two minds conſtructed, as I may ſay, upon the principles of the two oppoſite ſchemes of liberty and neceſſity: all the determinations of the one being invariably directed by its previous diſpoſitions, and the motives preſented to it; while the other ſhall have a power of determining, in all caſes, in a manner independent of any ſuch previous diſpoſition or motives; which is preciſely the difference between the ſyſtems of neceſſity and liberty, philoſophically and ſtrictly defined.* Here we find, what I have ſo often taken notice of, things ſoftened to prevent diſguſt: and previous diſpoſition, and motives (indefinitely taken) ſubſtituted in the room of abſolute decrees, and predeſtination.

However

However let us ſee, how you farther illuſtrate this point. *To avoid circumlocution let us call the former* (*i. e.* the neceſſary ſcheme) *A: and the latter* (the ſcheme of liberty) *B. I will farther ſuppoſe myſelf to be a father, and theſe two my children; and knowing their inward make and conſtitution, let us conſider, how I ſhall treat them. My object is to make them virtuous and happy.——Now ſince motives have a certain and neceſſary influence on the mind of A, I know, that the proſpect of good will certainly incline him to do, what I recommend to him: and the fear of evil will deter him from any thing, that I wiſh to diſſuade him from.* p. 76. Here, Sir, your laſt ſentence begins with the words—*Now ſince motives*—indeterminately. What are the motives here mentioned, and the influence of which you treat? Not any thing preſent and immediate certainly: for what influence can you bring to any purpoſe upon, what you call, a previous diſpoſition: upon a mind already determined and under abſolute control? You talk indeed of your perſuaſive powers, and their efficacy; but you manifeſtly beg the queſtion. You take for granted, what is the very thing to be explained. You add—*that other influences indeed, to which he may be expoſed,*

and

and that I am not aware of, may counteract my views, and thereby my object may be fruſtrated.— But notwithſtanding this, my diſcipline will likewiſe have its certain and neceſſary effect, counteracting in part, at leaſt, all foreign and unfavourable influence. Believe me, Sir, you have carried me in a ſhort ſpace through ſo great a maze; that I am quite confounded. I cannot conceive how your diſcipline, and influence, can have a certain and neceſſary effect, when other *influences* may *counteract your views*, and when your *object* may be *fruſtrated*. Or how your advice can counteract in any degree all foreign influence; when there is according to your own account a law of nature, and an unavoidable *foreign* power, by which the mind and all its operations have been originally determined. See p. 7. Yet you farther tell us, that *every promiſe, and every threatning, every reward and every puniſhment, judiciouſly adminiſtered, works to my end*—&c. But as there is a ſeeming inconſiſtency in all this, it is a pity that you had not reconciled the difficulties, which here occur; before you had laid down the principles, upon which you ſo determinately argue. Let us now turn our eyes to the other of the two characters, by which you are to illuſtrate your hypotheſis.

hypotheſis.—*But in my ſon B. I have to do with a creature of quite another make. Motives have no neceſſary, or certain influence upon his determinations, and in all caſes where the principle of freedom from the certain influence of motives takes place, it is exactly an equal chance, whether my rewards or puniſhments determine his actions or not. The ſelf-determining power is not at all of the nature of any mechanical influence, that may be counteracted by influences equally mechanical, but is a thing with reſpect to which I can make no ſort of calculation, and againſt which I can make no proviſion. Even the longeſt continued ſeries of proper actions, will form no habit that can be depended upon, and therefore after all my labour and anxiety, my object is quite precarious and uncertain.* p. 76. You have here, Sir, dreſſed up a character, agreeably to the ſentiments of thoſe, who maintain liberty, and the freedom of the will. And you ſay, that motives have *no neceſſary* or *certain influence* upon ſuch a perſon. You mention many truths, to which your opponents will, I believe, readily ſubſcribe. For what is extraordinary, that which you bring as an objection to their ſyſtem, is a manifeſt demonſtration of it's truth. You ſay, that a perſon in this ſtate of liberty, can never be certainly depended

depended on. You know not whether your praiſes or your rebukes will have any ſalutary effects. His future reſolutions can never be abſolutely known: *even the longeſt ſeries of proper actions will form no habit, that can be depended upon.* In ſhort your labour is quite precarious, as a father; and your views uncertain: for the ſon, upon whom theſe labours are expended, may poſſibly act in oppoſition to your beſt wiſhes. All this, Sir, is preciſely true; and the real hiſtory of man. No one breathes, who is not in this uncertain ſtate. There are many inducements to virtue; many motives to incline us to the truth; and though it is to be hoped, that they very often prevail: yet they have no certain, no neceſſary, influence upon our minds. There is nothing overbearing and irreſiſtible: we are after all left to chooſe freely: and it is poſſible for us to make a bad option. In ſhort we tread in ſlippery paths, and it would be preſumptuous in the beſt man, that ever lived, to ſay, that he ſhall not fall. Hence it is, that we are counſelled in the Holy Scriptures to know our imbecillity, and to call for Divine aſſiſtance, in order that our weakneſſes may be remedied, and that we may be eſtabliſhed in the way, in which we ſhould go. *O,*

hold

hold up thou my goings in thy paths, that my foot-steps slip not. Psalm xvii. 5. St. Paul mentions, how necessary it was for him, even an Apostle, to be upon his guard, lest after all he should *be cast away.* The account therefore, which you have given of the state of liberty, is the genuine history of man. It is the same which is described to us in the Scriptures: the same likewise, which our daily experience affords us. It is also authenticated by the authority of various philosophers: and you intimate, that you are one of that denomination: whence it is wonderful, that this truth should have escaped you. As this is the real history of man, the system of liberty is confirmed by it; and you have undesignedly given your attestation to the truth.

But these consequences, which have been deduced from your words, are very different from your original intention. In the characters drawn of the two persons, your supposed sons, you endeavour to shew that the former, in a state of absolute necessity, is liable to proper influences; can be led by paternal advice; and conducted any way at pleasure: and this with a degree of certainty. But the other,

in

in a ſtate of freedom, is ſuppoſed in this place to be partially affected by motives: in other places to be liable to no * motives at all. Now all this is paſt my comprehenſion. I cannot conceive, how a perſon in a ſtate of neceſſity, whoſe thoughts and actions have been for ages unalterably determined, can be led away by any new impulſe, and directed with ſo much eaſe. And that the perſon in a ſtate of liberty ſhould be ſo limited, that advice ſhould be either totally, or in a great degree, loſt upon him. You ſay afterwards, that he can never be wholly a proper object of diſcipline, that is of teaching, exhorting, and advice, *till his ſelf-determining power be entirely diſcharged.* Now as all advice muſt be ſubmitted to his option; according to your opinion he can never chooſe, till he has loſt the power of choice. In ſhort, Sir, I ſhould be ſorry to give a falſe turn to your argument; but you ſeem to me to contend, that a perſon determined in his principles is the moſt ready to be perſuaded, and that none are ſo inflexible, as thoſe who are open to conviction. The very nature of things

* See p. 82. and p. 85. of a perſon acting wrong, and making a bad choice without any motive.

A mere will acting without any motive, p. 85.

appears

appears to my apprehenſion inverted. You deny freedom, where there is the greateſt liberty: and admit it only under an abſolute neceſſity.

There are many of your aſſumptions afterwards, for which I cannot account, and to which I know not how to accede. That which follows is of this nature. *We have ſuppoſed that A has done a virtuous action, and has been commended, becauſe it proceeded from the bent of his mind to virtue, ſo that whenever proper circumſtances occurred, he neceſſarily did what we wiſhed him to have done. Let us now ſuppoſe, that B does the very ſame thing; but let it be fully underſtood, that the cauſe of his right determination was not any bias or diſpoſition of mind in favour of virtue; or becauſe a good motive influenced him to do it: but that his determination was produced by ſomething within him (call it by what name you pleaſe) of a quite different nature, with reſpect to which motives of any kind have no ſort of influence or effect, a mere arbitrary pleaſure, without any reaſon whatever (for a reaſon is a motive) and I apprehend he would no more be thought a proper ſubject of praiſe, notwithſtanding he ſhould do what is right in itſelf, than the dice*

which by a fortunate throw ſhould give a man an eſtate. It is true the action was right, but there was not the proper principle and motive, which are the only juſt foundation of praiſe. p. 81. You ſay afterwards, at the concluſion of ſome other of your proofs, *If this be not a juſt, impartial, and philoſophical ſtate of this caſe, I do not know, what is ſo*—p. 86. This is ſpoken very emphatically, and I accordingly leave it at large for the world to conſider; and to determine, as ſhall ſeem beſt. To me the whole appears to have been a very plain matter confounded: wherein right and wrong have changed places: and the one has been ſubſtituted for the other.

In another place, where you object to the ſcheme of liberty, you have the following words. *I will venture to ſay that let the caſe be ſtated with ever ſo much addreſs, and refinement, it will be ſtill found, that there cannot be any juſt foundation for praiſe, but upon a ſcheme, which ſuppoſes the mind to be ſo diſpoſed, as that juſt views of things will neceſſarily determine the will to right action. The two ſchemes of liberty and neceſſity admit of no medium between them.* p. 84. There is nobody, I ſhould think, but muſt allow, that a mind *well diſpoſed*, upon which a

juſt

juſt view of things properly operates, is entitled to praiſe. But how this can be conſiſtent with your ſcheme, is not eaſy to be conceived. You indeed ſpeak of a juſt view of things, which is *neceſſarily to determine the will.* But how is praiſe conſiſtent with neceſſity? And how indeed can any preſent *view of things* at all affect the will, which is antecedently determined? If the mind has a propenſity to any virtuous action, it was unavoidably impreſſed upon it, according to your principles. Whence then the claim to merit, and to praiſe?

SECTION VIII.

IN this you conſider, How far man's general conduct will be influenced by the belief of the doctrine of neceſſity. *It is imagined,* you ſay, *by ſome, that the apprehenſion of all the actions of men depending upon motives, which neceſſarily influence their determinations, ſo that no action or event could poſſibly be otherwiſe, than it has been, is, or is to be, would make men indifferent in reſpect to their conduct, or to what befals them in life. I anſwer ſo it would, if their own actions and determinations were not neceſſary links in this chain of cauſes and events: and if their*

good or bad ſucceſs did not, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word, depend upon themſelves, p. 96. We have here the ſame ſubject of debate brought over again: and the ſame detail of cauſes and effects renewed under the figure of a chain and its links. The misfortune, Sir, is, that in your anſwer to the difficulty propoſed the queſtion is begged here, as in other places; and what wants moſt to be proved is taken for granted. Such is your arbitrary poſition, that perſons under an abſolute neceſſity, all whoſe thoughts and actions are decreed, muſt for their good and evil in life *in the ſtricteſt manner depend upon themſelves*. What dependance can people have upon themſelves, who are ſubjected to a prior and invincible obligation; and whoſe thoughts and actions have been previouſly decreed? You try afterwards to give ſome ſolution to this difficulty: and at laſt afford us an example by way of illuſtration. How ſatisfactory this may appear, can only be known from your own words, which I ſhall accordingly lay before the reader.—*All this may perhaps be more intelligible by example: I ſhall therefore endeavour to give one. No man entertains a doubt, but that every thing relating to vegetation is ſubject to the eſtabliſhed laws of nature;*

and

and ſuppoſing this to be the caſe, with reſpect to the human mind, and its operations, a being, of perfect intelligence and foreſight, will know how we ſhall be provided for the next or any future year; ſo that in fact our proviſion for the next year, and all the events of it, are abſolutely fixed, and nothing can interfere, to make it otherwiſe than it is to be. p. 111. Here for a moment I will ſtop ſhort: as we are now come to the very point, which will ſerve for a criterion between the man of liberty and the rigid predeſtinarian. You, Sir, with thoſe of your ſyſtem, maintain, that as God foreknows every event to come, therefore all things are abſolutely fixed, having of old been predetermined: and that nothing happens but by an abſolute unalterable decree. Now the perſon, who proceeds upon the ſyſtem of liberty and freewill, acknowledges, as you do, that all things are foreſeen by the Deity: but his foreſight and antecedent knowledge had no more influence upon the things in the womb of time, than our immediate knowledge and intuition have upon things preſent and before our eyes. Things would proceed, as they do, whether we ſaw them or not. This perſon thinks the doctrine of Neceſſity or Fate, contrary to experience; and inconſiſtent

with the gift of reaſon; notwithſtanding all that has been ſaid in its favour. But you will ſay with Mr. Hobbes: if we ſet aſide abſolute decrees, and neceſſity, we deſtroy *the preſcience* of the Deity. *For whatever God foreſees ſhall come to paſs; a man, if he has liberty, might fruſtrate.* I anſwer, not in the leaſt. This notion ariſes from our preſumption in circumſcribing God's power, and not knowing the extent of Omniſcience. You boldly confine this great attribute, and limit it to cauſe and effect: and if it has not its origin from thoſe means, you raſhly inſiſt, that God cannot have any foreknowledge. But on my part, though I am ſenſible, that it exiſts, yet I do not preſume to determine in what manner: nor do I make its reality depend upon the powers of the human mind, nor the depth of my own knowledge. I am well aſſured, that it exiſts in a moſt abſolute manner, and can never be made void. Indeed the very notion of God's foreknowledge being fruſtrated is a contradiction: an abſolute inconſiſtency. As man is gifted with freedom in his thoughts and actions; he may heſitate, he may doubt, and delay the execution of his purpoſes. But after all there is an ultimate, to which he muſt come: he muſt one way or

other determine: and that ultimate and determination was certainly foreſeen by the Deity: You may yourſelf fluctuate and be uncertain; but this uncertainty was foreſeen by God; and though you may not know your own reſolution, yet it was known to him. In ſhort—Verte omnes tete in facies, et contrahe quicquid, ſive animis, ſive arte vales: be deſignedly indeterminate, yet it will amount to nothing: your laſt reſolves are aſſuredly known, and were ſo from the beginning. You ſay, that this muſt proceed from a ſeries of cauſes and effects: and if it does not originate from them, that it cannot exiſt at all. You appear to me much too raſh and confident in limiting Omnipotence; and determining the ways of the Moſt High. By many pious and learned men the foreknowledge of the Deity has been thought to conſiſt in a vaſt comprehenſive power of the Divine mind: in a wonderful and boundleſs intuition; through which all things, paſt, preſent, and to come, have been intimately and immediately known from the beginning. But you fondly think, that if man is gifted with freedom of thought and action, that he can diſappoint the Almighty, and render his foreknowledge abortive. What an abſurd ſurmiſe

is this? No real foreknowledge can be made void: therefore do not call things by wrong names: For be aſſured, that the preſcience of the Deity cannot be either controlled; or rendered ineffectual. It would not be foreknowledge, were ſuch a thing poſſible. *His ways are higher than our ways; and his thoughts, than our thoughts.* His underſtanding cannot be fathomed by mortals. In ſhort let us act or think as we pleaſe, ſtill we muſt come to a concluſion: and the whole was ever open to Him from whom nothing is hid; both the determination, at whatever time it may be brought about, and the ſecret workings by which it was effected.

But I may be wrong in deferring ſo long the example, by which you purpoſed to illuſtrate your ſcheme. You had intimated that there was an analogy between the human mind, and vegetation: and that they were both ſubject *to the ſame laws of nature.* p. 98. And in reſpect to the former the produce of each year was determined of old; and *nothing can interfere to make it otherwiſe than it is to be. But,* ſay you, *will any Farmer, believing this ever ſo firmly, neglect on this account to ſow his fields and content himſelf*

himſelf with ſaying, God knows how I ſhall be provided for the next year? I cannot change his decree, and let his will be done. We ſee in fact, that ſuch a perſuaſion never operates in this manner: becauſe though the chain of events is neceſſary, our own determinations and actions are neceſſary links of that chain. This gives the Farmer the fulleſt aſſurance, that if it be decreed for him to ſtarve, it is likewiſe decreed for him to neglect to ſow his fields; but if he do ſow his fields, which depends entirely upon himſelf, that then, ſince the laws of nature are invariable, it will be evident, that no ſuch unfavourable decree had gone forth. p. 99. This in truth, Sir, is a very elaborate illuſtration: which I am ſorry to ſay, after all your trouble, I am not able to comprehend. I cannot conceive, how it ſhould come to paſs, that, if a Farmer ſtarves, it is by an abſolute decree: if he grows rich and in good plight, *it depends entirely upon himſelf:* You ſeem in the latter caſe to give up the neceſſity for which you have been contending: and to admit the liberty, which you before denied. In reſpect to the Farmer's ſoliloquy I ſee nothing ſo improper in it upon your principles: were they in reality in full force. But I am confident, that though a perſon may be a Pre-

a Predeſtinarian in theory; he will never be ſo in practice. You ſay well of the countrymen's perſuaſion, that *it never operates in this manner*. You are undoubtedly in the right. We may be aſſured, that the honeſt ruſtic had never any conception of this nature. When he was to plough and to ſow, he never in the leaſt thought of a long chain of neceſſary events: nor that his own *determinations and actions were neceſſary links of that chain*. Whatever decrees you may frame for him, he is of a firm opinion, that his ſowing and his reaping *depend entirely upon himſelf*: and he acts in conformity to this perſuaſion. He knows ſo much of the *invariable laws of nature* that corn will not grow of itſelf: and that without culture he ſhall have nothing but dock and darnel. In ſhort, as I have before ſaid, I believe you will never find a thorough-paced practical Predeſtinarian.

SECTION IX.

THE purport of this Section is the Moral Influence of the Doctrine of Neceſſity: and the happy conſequences, which reſult from it. It is ſaid, that mankind in general cannot arrive

arrive at the great truths, which are contained in this ſyſtem. *They have*, we are told, *no apprehenſion of the real and unavoidable conſequences of the principles, they every day act upon. They would even be alarmed, and ſtaggered, if thoſe conſequences were pointed out to them.* p. 104. *When they are told, that in conſequence of theſe conceſſions, they muſt admit, that nothing could have been otherwiſe than it has been; that every thing comes to paſs in conſequence of an eſtabliſhed conſtitution of things, &c.—that God is to be conſidered as the proper and ſole cauſe of all things, good and evil, natural and moral, they are ſtaggered, and withhold their aſſent.*

From this place, therefore, the Philoſopher muſt be content to proceed by himſelf. But we ſhall ſee, that his more comprehenſive views of the ſyſtem of nature are not leſs, but much more favourable to his improvement in virtue and happineſs, than the more limited views of the bulk of mankind.—p. 105.

But previous to this I would obſerve, that the practical uſe of theſe philoſophical views is confined to a man's cooler moments, when the mind is not under the influence of any violent emotion or paſſion.

For

For ſince the mind of a Philoſopher is formed, and the aſſociations, by which it is influenced, are fixed exactly like thoſe of other men, he will not be able in the general tumult and hurry of life, to feel, think, or act, in a manner different from other men. A provocation will fix his reſentment—and a grateful or kind action will, in like manner, direct his love—&c. p. 106.—*We are now therefore to conſider what are the feelings of the Philoſopher retired from the world, under the influence of no violent emotion, and therefore contemplating nothing very recent.* p. 106.—*Now in my opinion, his philoſophical views will give an elevation and force to his piety, and to virtue in all its branches, that could have been acquired any other way. And this may be perceived in thoſe perſons, whoſe general views of things have approached the neareſt to thoſe, that are truly philoſophical.—The ſpirit of devotion in general muſt be greatly promoted—It will not be poſſible to bear ill will to any of our brethren:—In ſhort this one leading principle of devotion cannot fail to regulate the whole temper and conduct.* p. 108. 109. *No other than a Neceſſarian can poſſibly attain to the full perſuaſion of this great and invaluable truth.—With ſuch ſublime views of the ſyſtem and the author of it, as theſe, vice is abſolutely incompatible: and more eſpecially,*

hatred,

hatred, envy, and malice, are totally excluded. I cannot as a Neceſſarian hate any man. p. 111.—*If as a Neceſſarian, I ceaſe to blame men for their vices in the ultimate ſenſe of the word; though in the common and proper ſenſe of it I continue to do ſo,* &c.—*I on my ſyſtem cannot help viewing them with a tenderneſs, and compaſſion, that will have an infinitely finer and happier effect,* &c. p. 112. You have, Sir, placed your ſyſtem in ſo fair a light, and ſo affectingly deſcribed its happy conſequences, that I am nearly induced to adopt in ſome degree the words of Agrippa to Paul, and ſay—*Almoſt thou perſuadeſt me to be a Neceſſarian.* The love, the charity, and the univerſal benevolence, which you hold forth, would, one would think, be inducements to any perſon of a rational turn of mind, and engage him to your party. And I do not ſee any thing to impede my immediate converſion, but one or two ſcruples, which I know not how to overcome. You intimate, good Sir, in more places than one, that you are a philoſopher: and you have good reaſon to take that title to yourſelf. Your deep reſearches, in nature, and your experimental knowledge, are well known: and your diſcoveries have been eſteemed of great conſequence: on which

account

account the world looks up to you very juſtly with high eſteem and honour. Scarcely any in this department can rank before you. And in reſpect to the preſent ſyſtem, which you have been preſenting to us, you intimate, that you have arrived at an inſight in theſe matters, to which none but a Philoſopher can attain. You may therefore be looked upon as the chief pillar of your cauſe: and if the virtues above mentioned do naturally ariſe from your ſyſtem, we may ſuppoſe them to be eminently in you. But herein I think, that I perceive ſome little failure. If anger and reſentment are incompatible with neceſſity: if, when devoted to that ſyſtem you *cannot hate a man*; and are really gifted with that *infinitely refined tenderneſs and compaſſion* for others, which you have mentioned; how comes it, that there is not a greater ſhew of it? For you are ſenſible, that *the tree is known by its fruits.* In ſhort how comes it, that you ſometimes forget your neceſſarian charity, and ſo cruelly fall foul of Dr. Beattie? And not only of Dr. Beattie and his *inſtinctive common ſenſe*, but of ſome others, who differ from you in opinion; and whom you treat with not a little roughneſs. Perhaps, as a Neceſſarian you do not abuſe them for their

their failings *in the ultimate ſenſe of the word*, but *in the common ſenſe of it:* which may afford them ſome conſolation, if they underſtand your meaning. In ſhort, if thoſe ſalutary effects, which you mention, were the real conſequences of the doctrines, which you have embraced and recommend, they would be particularly conſpicuous in yourſelf, as you are more eminent than any of your brethren. But, believe me, I do not perceive any more candour, benevolence, and charity, from your words, than is to be found among other people: which makes me doubt much of the ſuppoſed excellency of your ſyſtem. Nor is it only from you, that we have a right to expect theſe marks of ſuperiority, but from all thoſe, who in any degree adhere to the doctrines of Neceſſity and Predeſtination. If theſe Chriſtian virtues are the particular reſult of thoſe opinions, as you ſay; they muſt be very conſpicuous among the perſons, who have embraced them. Now theſe we know to be chiefly the Calviniſts; a portion of people, of whoſe community you once were; and conſequently muſt be well acquainted with their tenets, as well as their manners. They are many of them rigid Predeſtinarians, and ſhould

on

on that account, ſurpaſs all other people in meekneſs, charity, and virtue in general. But we have your evidence, that it is not ſo. You ſpeak in p. 161. of *the Calviniſtic ſcheme, as a gloomy one:* and you ſay,—*where a diſpoſition to vice has preoccupied the mind, I am well ſatisfied, and but too many facts might be alledged to prove it, that the doctrines of Calviniſm have been actually fatal to the remains of virtue: and have driven men into the moſt deſperate and abandoned courſe of wickedneſs.* p. 162. You likewiſe confeſs, p. 164. that though there be undoubtedly among them men, whoſe hearts and lives *are truly Chriſtian,* yet there is often found in others of this perſuaſion—*great malignity of heart, concealed under all the external forms of devotion.* I muſt confeſs on my part, that I never was witneſs to any ſuch malignity: but we have your word for it; and will therefore acquieſce in what you affirm. You likewiſe mention ſome cruel treatment, which you have experienced from the Calviniſts; and that you was *exaſperated* againſt them. p. 164. But if your ſyſtem, as you ſay, is ſuperiour to all others; and is productive of nothing but peace, charity, and benevolence; attended with all the gentle affections of tenderneſs and compaſſion; whence

proceeds

proceeds ſuch malignity and ill-will, with all this bitterneſs of gall? How come the elect, whom we ſhould have thought exempt from theſe infernal qualities, to abound with them more than others? I by no means affirm that they do: but I only argue from what you have ſaid of them, as well as of yourſelf. For I am unwilling to think ſo ill of a community, which has produced ſome excellent men; particularly a Leland and Foſter.

Moreover as the Calviniſts are ſuppoſed to have a large portion of the divine influence, and to feel intimately the grace of God operating within them, one muſt neceſſarily be led to expect, that they would enjoy a particular gleam of comfort; a heavenly ſerenity, in conſequence of this bleſſing. The divine truths alſo ſhould be more open to them than to others; and their principles, one would think, ſhould be the beſt founded. Yet, though they are as much Neceſſarians as yourſelf, you diſapprove of their principles, and ſeem to intimate from them, that the Calviniſts are under an illuſion. *Upon the whole however, the acquaintance I have had with Calviniſts convinces me, that their principles, in the minds of calm ſober-thinking perſons, will always leave ſome room for doubt and uncertainty*

with reſpect to the evidence of their converſion; and what is called the work of grace in the heart, in which much muſt neceſſarily be left to the imagination; and therefore that at times a gloom will be ſpread over the ſoul.—Unleſs this effect be counteracted, their principles do not admit of that perfect ſerenity and chearfulneſs, with which it is to be wiſhed that a life of real piety and virtue might ever be attended. p. 165. At this rate I do not ſee any the leaſt advantage, that a Neceſſarian has in proof of his orthodoxy: There is nothing, that can perſuade us of the ſuperiour excellence of his ſyſtem. He is deſcribed, as in a ſtate of uncertainty, if not of infatuation: and his principles are ſaid to lead to gloom and melancholy; and, if we may truſt to what has been ſaid before, to abſolute deſpair. Theſe things, if true, do not ſeem to be the fruits of the Spirit: nor can they recommend the ſyſtem, in which they are found.

You may perhaps ſay, that your notions about neceſſity are very different from thoſe of the Calviniſts. They may be ſo: but it is a point, in which I am not concerned. In reality I believe, it will be found a diſtinction without a difference. There may be ſome

things, in which you fancy that you do not agree with them: but your firſt principles are the ſame. You both believe in abſolute decrees, and unavoidable deſtiny: and the ſame conſequences muſt follow, however on your part you may try to evade them.

SECTION X.

WE are here informed, *In what ſenſe God may be conſidered as the author of ſin: and of the objection to the doctrine of neceſſity on that account.* You are pleaſed to tell us more than once, that when people have conſidered the conſequences which naturally reſult from your principles, they are *ſtaggered* and *frightened:* and have not the courage to proceed. Believe me, good Sir, I do not wonder at it: for the path ſeems to lead to a precipice, and every ſtep is over burning embers. There are few of ſuch courage as not to be appalled, when they hear the God of all goodneſs made the author of all evil. You indeed put your queſtion, *In what ſenſe God* may be ſo conſidered: but there is only an alternative, that he either is, or is not: and however you may ſoften things at ſetting out, you at laſt determine,

that he is ſo in every ſenſe, *by making him the proper cauſe of all evil.* p. 125. In this place you go ſo far as to ſay, that as all evils are ſubſervient to greater good,—*every thing without diſtinction may be ſafely aſcribed to God.* p. 115. Surely, Sir, this is as raſh as it is ſhocking; How can a perſon of the leaſt reverence towards his Creator, ſuppoſe that the God of all goodneſs and juſtice, as well as of all purity and holineſs, ſhould have decreed, theft, murder, parricide, and every ſpecies of cruelty? that he ſhould have ordained and appointed pollution, filth, inceſt, and every unnatural deſire; directed every evil affection of the mind; and with a high hand carried every crime into execution? Do not, Sir, think it want of fortitude in me, if I tremble at the bare recital: for it is paſt expreſſion ſhocking to conceive the horrid conſequences, which neceſſarily follow from your principles. You give a reaſon for what you ſo boldly aſſert: that *whatever terminates in good, philoſophically ſpeaking, is good.* This, Sir, is an aphoriſm as falſe as it is dangerous. It was an article of the Jeſuits creed: by which they thought they were authorized to wade through a ſea of blood in order to arrive at a remote advantage. As for your qualifying

ing it by the terms *philoſophically ſpeaking*: I know not the meaning of the limitation. You afterwards confeſs, that the whole is a mere theory; and not to be reduced to practice: which is very ſtrange. *But this is a view of moral evil, which though innocent, and even uſeful in ſpeculation, no wiſe man can, or would chooſe to act upon himſelf, becauſe our underſtandings are too limited for the application of ſuch a means of good: though a Being of infinite knowledge may introduce it with the greateſt advantage —While our natures are, what they are,—we muſt ſhun vice as any other evil, and indeed the greateſt of all evils, and chooſe virtue as the greateſt good.* p. 115. But have you not, Sir, ſaid, that God is the author of evil: that it proceeds from his original decrees: what room then is there for man either to chooſe or to ſhun? In truth I try, but am at a loſs, to find your meaning. I am overpowered by words and bewildered. I am obliged again and again to recur to what you have ſaid: that *the two ſchemes of liberty and neceſſity admit of no medium.* p. 84. That all things have been *decreed:* and that our will is under the direction of an *abſolute* and *foreign power.* p. 8. You here ſeem to forget theſe things: and to allow to man a

free will, by giving him a power of chooſing and rejecting. For theſe conceſſions, as I have repeatedly ſaid, I know not how to account. You proceed to illuſtrate your ſyſtem: and to palliate, what you have aſſerted, by telling us, *that ſuppoſing God to be the author of ſin, it by no means implies, that he is a ſinful being.—If his diſpoſition and deſign be good, what he does is morally good.* This, I imagine, will hardly be granted: that luſt, murder, inceſt, parricide, can at any rate be morally good; whatever may be the conſequences. However you try to illuſtrate and prove your tenets by example. *It was wicked,* you ſay, *in Joſeph's brethren to ſell him into Egypt: becauſe they acted from envy, hatred, and covetouſneſs: but it was not wicked in God, becauſe in appointing it, he was not actuated by any ſuch principle. In him it was gracious and good,* &c. p. 117. This is ſurely a weak argument. How would a Voltaire, a Diderot, and even your friend Hume, ſmile at theſe feeble expedients; by which you try to free your ſelf from the difficulties, into which you have been raſhly involved? You tell us, that it was wicked in Joſeph's brethren to behave as they did, *becauſe they acted from envy, hatred, and covetouſneſs.* But was not this hatred,

tred, and this envy, *decreed?* Do not you ſay, that all things, good and evil, may be aſcribed to the Deity. p. 115. Do not you in ſo many words, p. 127. l. 24. make God *the cauſe of all evil?* How then were the perſons concerned in the ſale of their brother accountable for their paſſions, any more than for the conſequences, which enſued from them. They were according to your principles under an abſolute neceſſity; and acted in obedience to an irreſiſtible power. Why then do you ſtile them wicked? You yourſelf have been trying through 100 pages to prove that all things proceed from the Deity. A Voltaire would therefore aſk, How comes it, Sir, if the purpoſe and end be good, that the means are not equally excellent: for though you may allot in this place only the good purpoſe to God, and the evil to Joſeph's brethren, yet in other places you aſcribe to him the whole: you inſiſt that all things are ordained by his counſels: and as you admit him to be the author of all good; ſo (ſhocking to conceive!) you make him the contriver of all evil. Therefore upon your ſyſtem, the good and the evil muſt deſcend from the ſame fountain.

You tell us, that *Mr. Hume, who in general diſcuſſes the queſtion concerning liberty and neceſſity with great clearneſs, intirely abandons the doctrine of neceſſity to the moſt immoral and ſhocking conſequences.*—He ſays (Philoſoph. Eſſays, p. 157.) that upon the ſcheme of neceſſity, *human actions can either have no turpitude at all, as proceeding from ſo good a cauſe, as the Deity: or if they have any moral turpitude, they muſt involve our Creator in the ſame guilt.* p. 119. A fearful alternative truly: and, whatever you may think, not to be ſolved upon the principles of neceſſity. You accuſe Mr. Hume in this caſe: but he acts conſiſtently: you yourſelf have ſaid the ſame thing in other words; and then try to ſoften the harſhneſs of the doctrine, but to little purpoſe. Theſe fatal conſequences follow naturally and muſt be admitted upon your ſyſtem. You aſk indeed, *Did not this writer know, what is known to all the world, that the motive or intention, with which a thing is done, is the circumſtance, that principally conſtitutes it's morality?* With what contempt would Mr. Hume treat this palliating *circumſtance?* He would in his turn aſk, *whether it were poſſible, when the Deity decreed evil, that he ſhould never intend it? Yes,* you will ſay, *he did indeed intend it, but*

but it was with a purpoſe to bring forth good. But it will be ſaid,—*If the whole comes from God, why could not an All-powerful Being produce the good without the evil?* And that which was aſked before may be again required—*If the purpoſe was good, why were not the means equally excellent?* You ſay, the diſpoſition is that, which conſtitutes morality. But in reality good and evil, virtue and vice, are irreconcileably different: and no purpoſe, nor diſpoſition, can make them other, than they are. You have, Sir, brought yourſelf into difficulties, from which you cannot with all your art and ſubtilty diſengage yourſelf. Mr. Hume was a man of a dark turn: devoted to doubt and uncertainty. If we may not ſay, that he did not believe in a Providence, yet it cannot be affirmed that he did. He ſeems to have been, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, an *undetermined Atheiſt*. All therefore, that he has ſaid upon this occaſion, is conſiſtent with his principles. But you, Sir, who own, that you believe in a Deity, are guilty of great inconſiſtency: from which you cannot free yourſelf. Every fatal conſequence, which Mr. Hume deduces from the doctrine of neceſſity, follows in the ſame manner from your ſyſtem. But you

try

try to extenuate what you ſay; being unwilling to fright people with the fatal tendency of theſe principles. You ſeem yourſelf to ſtart back, as if in ſome degree ſhocked: and in good truth, you have reaſon. In conſequence of this you would fain alter the eſſence of vice, and impiety. By the help of a taliſmanic word, *Diſpoſition*; crimes change their nature: Theft, robbery, murder, ebriety, luſt, envy, revenge, become innocent: Sin and guilt are by you reconciled with *juſtice*: and the moſt foul and deformed vices with the *Beauty* of *Holineſs*. You believe, Sir, in the ſcriptures; and you muſt ſurely remember, how very expreſs the Prophet is upon this head. *Woe unto them, that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs: that put bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter.* Iſaiah c. 5. v. 20.

You endeavour to excuſe the introduction of moral evil into the world, which you ſuppoſe to be the work of the Deity, by ſaying, *That the Divine Being may adopt ſome things, which he would not have choſen on their own account: but for the ſake of other things, with which they were connected.* p. 124. But in this you

you greatly leſſen the majeſty of the Deity, and bring down the Creator to a level with his creatures: attributing to him the ſame impotence in his counſels; and laying him under the ſame neceſſity and reſtraint. And to excuſe it ſtill farther, you maintain, that according to the fundamental laws of nature morality could not exiſt *without* * *vice.* p. 125. They are to be ſure in human life contraſted as much as light and darkneſs. But to aver, that the one depends upon the other, and cannot ſubſiſt without it, is a moſt unwarrantable aſſertion. You may as well ſay, that there could not be ſunſhine without ſhade: whereas the ſun would be in full luſtre, though there were not a ſingle opaque body within the ſphere of his rays. At this rate the kingdom of righteouſneſs, promiſed by our Saviour, can never come, in the manner we expect it: for upon your principles there muſt be a proper ſhare of *folly* and *wickedneſs* in the other world to conſtitute ſuch a

* *According to the moſt fundamental laws of Nature, and indeed the nature of things, great virtues in ſome could not be generated, nor exiſt, but in conjunction with great vices in others. For it is this oppoſition, that not only exhibits them to advantage, but even properly ſpeaking creates them.*

kingdom.

kingdom. But be aſſured, that things are very different from what you imagine. A kingdom will undoubtedly be eſtabliſhed, where there will be purity without ſpot, and holineſs without foil or blemiſh. And the ſame might have been in this, were it not for the perverſeneſs of man; and his abuſe of the liberty, with which he was from the beginning endowed. You inſiſt the whole tribe of virtues are created by their oppoſite failings. That without a proportional quantity of moral evil; there could be *no fortitude, no elevation of ſoul, nor reſignation to the will of God.* p. 125. But this is a great miſtake. The envy, hatred, and malice of the world may call forth theſe happy qualities; and render them conſpicuous: but the moral excellence, from whence they proceed, the original parent virtue, would exiſt, though they were not diſplayed. We may imagine a rich treaſure to be in a coffer, though there may not be any demand for it's being immediately produced; and as I ſaid before, a light may ſhine though there be no contraſt. Suppoſe the world were univerſally good. Would it not be a ſtrange aphoriſm to maintain, *that virtue would ceaſe to be virtue, when it came to be uniformly practiſed: and that,*

if

if love, duty, and allegiance, were punctually kept up, we ſhould be void of all morality? Nothing, I ſhould think, could be more unwarrantable: and yet theſe are the natural conſequences of the principles, which you have laid down.

When among other objects of creation it pleaſed God to make man; He formed him in his own image: and endowed him with a reaſonable ſoul. And he placed before him good and evil, that he might have opportunities of exerciſing the noble faculty, with which he was bleſſed; and thereby ſhew a proper ſenſe of duty to the hand, which had formed him. When man was thus gifted with reaſon, there ſeems to have been this alternative only, in reſpect to his future conduct: either he was to have liberty to employ the powers beſtowed upon him; to ſeparate, diſtinguiſh, and make his option accordingly: or he was to be under the abſolute influence of a ſuperior power; and to be directed in all his ways. If then we may take the liberty to judge from the ſmall light afforded us concerning the operations of the Moſt High, which may we preſume to think moſt conſonant to Divine wiſdom? whether to grant man the liberty of reaſoning, and employing

ploying the faculties, with which he was inveſted: or to overrule his will by a foreign influence: and though he retained the gift, yet to abridge him of the uſe of it? You, Sir, ſeem to acknowledge, that this muſt have been the alternative; by ſaying, that there can be no *medium* between neceſſity and freedom. And in conſequence of it, I hope, it will not be preſumptuous to ſuppoſe, that as it has pleaſed God to beſtow the gift of reaſon, it was his intention to indulge man in the uſe of it, and not to counteract his own purpoſes. For a power of reaſoning without the liberty to reaſon were a vain gift. From hence we may be able to anſwer the queſtion of old about evil; which has been with ſome triumph repeated by Mr. Hume. **Why is there any miſery at all in the world? Not by chance ſurely. From ſome cauſe then. Is it from the intention of the Deity? But he is perfectly benevolent. Is it contrary to his intention? But he is Almighty. Nothing can ſhake the ſolidity of this reaſoning, ſo ſhort, ſo clear, and ſo deciſive: except we aſſert, that theſe ſubjects exceed all human capacity.* The queſtion, which he puts partially about pain and miſery, has been often aſked about evil in general: and

* Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, p. 194.

he

he afterwards refers to it himſelf, inſiſting, that it is inexplicable. *If we preſerve human analogy, we muſt ever find it impoſſible to reconcile any mixture of evil in the univerſe with infinite attributes.* p. 198. He may after all be too ſelf-ſufficient; eſpecially as he thinks the ſubject may poſſibly exceed human capacity. What we cannot obtain by our own natural light, may be in ſome degree afforded by revelation. In conſequence of which permit me to aſk ſome queſtions. Is it inconſiſtent with the wiſdom of the Creator to produce different degrees of ſubordinate beings: and inſtead of one ſpecies enrich the world with many? I truſt, that no body can except to this procedure: nor think it an impeachment either of his wiſdom or his juſtice. Is there in the next place any impropriety, among other objects of creation, to produce man: and to endow him with reaſon, that he may diſtinguiſh between good and evil? Surely nobody can have the preſumption or the ingratitude to arraign the Deity on this head. Who can repine at his being made a rational creature rather than a brute beaſt; or being reduced to a ſtock or a ſtone? But if the Deity enriched man with the faculty of reaſon, to diſtinguiſh and to chooſe; can we ſuppoſe that he

he would overrule that power by an abſolute neceſſity; and not ſuffer man, to whom it is given, to employ it after the manner intended? Would it not appear ſtrange, that a gift ſhould be beſtowed, and the liberty of exerciſing it be taken away? That a man ſhould be bleſſed with the means of conducting himſelf, and yet be ever under the direction of another? Is it poſſible to conceive, that the Deity ſhould run counter to his own purpoſes; and make his beſt gifts unneceſſary and uſeleſs? For there is no occaſion for reaſon to diſtinguiſh, if we are never allowed the liberty of determination. Does it not ſeem vain to give a power of chooſing, and at the ſame time to abridge us of all choice? To allow us a will, but take away the power of volition: which, according to you, Sir, is ever to be directed by a foreign influence: an influence not ariſing from our own judgment: but from an abſolute decree, an irreſiſtible motive, which takes away all mental determination?

As far as we can learn from the ſcriptures we may be aſſured, that man from the beginning was bleſſed with the high prerogative of reaſon; and at the ſame time with full liberty

to

to uſe it. If any evil has ariſen from the abuſe of this noble gift, it is in my opinion blaſphemy to place it to the account of the all-juſt God; as it proceeds immediately from man. How can we ſuppoſe him, who is ſaid to be of purer eyes than even *to behold iniquity*, to be the author of all wickedneſs? Yet you ſay that he permits evil: that is, he permits man to act in conformity to the ſtation, in which he is placed; and to the powers allotted him. Whatever is created, if not equal to the Creator, muſt be infinitely ſhort of his excellence. But what creature can be ſuppoſed to be equal to the omnipotent and all-wiſe God? Whatever then is created muſt be comparatively imperfect: and from imperfection evil will neceſſarily ariſe. There is a natural imbecillity to which every thing is liable. Why do you not arraign divine wiſdom, as well as divine juſtice, for ſuffering the graſs to wither, the flower to fade, and the tree to die? Why do you not adjudge it a defect and impropriety in the proceſs of creation, that the oyſter ſhould want locomotivity; that the tortoiſe ſhould be ever burthened with its houſe; that the eagle cannot ſwim, nor the ſhark run, nor the mule fly? Why is not your pride aggrieved that every

thing created is not at once immortal? Man like all other animals is limited: and this, both in reſpect to the powers of his body and the faculties of the mind. Though nobly endowed, yet he is neither omnipotent nor omniſcient: but infinitely below any ſuch extraordinary pretenſions. He is therefore liable to err; and, through the imbecillity of his mind, to miſapply the talents with which he is gifted. He is enriched with reaſon; and it is his duty to conſider, to diſtinguiſh; and to judge without prejudice. His powers were given for this purpoſe: and if he falls off, and abuſes theſe powers, it is his own fault, and to be imputed to him ſolely. But you repeatedly aſk, Has not the Deity a ſuperior power: and cannot he prevent this abuſe? That is, as God has been pleaſed to beſtow upon man the faculty of reaſon, in order that he may judge between right and wrong; and determine accordingly; cannot he overrule this power, counteract his own purpoſes, and render the gift uſeleſs. In reſpect to power he undoubtedly can: but every thing, which can be done, may not be conſiſtent with divine wiſdom. It ſeems, as far as man can judge, indiſpenſably neceſſary, that every thing in its department,

ſhould

ſhould fulfil the purpoſe, for which it was deſigned: and if man is gifted with a power of judging and determining, that he ſhould judge for himſelf, whatever may be the conſequence, and not be always determined by a foreign influence. You, Sir, inſiſt, that to permit evil is as bad as to cauſe it. But give me leave to ſtate our two opinions and ſee if things can poſſibly be, as you aſſert: for, as far as I can judge, the whole of your argument and ſyſtem, ſeems to lead to a great impiety. According to my beſt judgment all moral evil originates in man, from an abuſe of his reaſon, and of the liberty given him both to judge and to determine. All this was foreſeen by the Deity; and in reſpect to power could have been prevented. But then man could not have been man: his liberty of judging and acting muſt have been overruled: and a rational being muſt not have been permitted to reaſon; which is the ſame thing as if the gift had never been granted. Man therefore was left to make uſe of his faculties, and to enjoy that liberty, with which he had been endowed: and if he has miſemployed his talents, and any evil has reſulted from the liberty beſtowed upon him, that evil muſt be imputed to him only. The

Deity permits it; as it cannot be totally reſtrained in man, without defeating the very purpoſe of his creation. It can be remedied, and will be remedied by him, who out of evil brings forth good, and can reinſtate the fallen creature. All this will be in the fullneſs of time accompliſhed, when his gracious purpoſes will effectually take place.

If then we preſume to object to the evil, which originates in man: we muſt retract our aſſent to the propriety both of his being created, and of his being endowed, as we find him to be. We muſt inſiſt, that he ſhould have been otherwiſe framed and gifted: for as he is, theſe conſequences muſt neceſſarily follow. To be ſure the ſceptic may ſo inſiſt: but then man would no longer be man; the ſuppoſition refers to another creature: and the argument is as abſurd, as it is impious. Mr. Hume in his enquiry about evil aſks, whether *it is from the intention of the Deity?* and adds, *but he is perfectly benevolent. Is it contrary to his intention? but he is Almighty. Nothing can ſhake the ſolidity of this reaſoning**. Yet the whole of this formidable queſtion amounts only to this, *whether the all-*

* Diſcourſes concerning Nat. Relig. p. 194.

perfect

perfect God can produce any thing imperfect? in other words, *whether he muſt neceſſarily produce all things equal to himſelf?* But the queſtion is as abſurd, as the thing itſelf is *impoſſible: for perfection is to be found in him only: and all created things muſt fall infinitely ſhort of his excellence. They may be ſaid to be ſo far perfect, as that they anſwer to the wiſe purpoſes, for which they were deſigned. Thus as an inſect is fitted to it's proper ſphere; ſo is man adapted to the department which he is to fill. The whole is done with great juſtice and propriety: and whatever may be the conſequences, we cannot without the utmoſt impiety arraign the diſpoſition.

Above, Sir, you have my opinion, that the moral evil, with which we are converſant, originates in man: and that the Deity ſuffers it: as it is the neceſſary conſequence of the liberty, with which we are gifted. You ſay, that to ſuffer it, *is the ſame as willing and directly cauſing*

* Dr. Prieſtly has this conceſſion: from which, I think, he might have made many proper inferences.—*That God might have made all men ſinleſs and happy, might, for any thing that we know, have been as impoſſible, as his making them not finite, but infinite beings, in all reſpects equal to himſelf.* p. 118.

It. p. 126. and you go farther and maintain, that all evil proceeds from the Deity: he decreed and ordained it from the beginning. The neceſſary inferences from hence are ſhocking beyond conception. According to your ſyſtem every foul and polluted thought muſt proceed from the God of all purity. All perfidy and falſhood was decreed by the God of juſtice and truth. In ſhort there is no inſtance of wickedneſs, but muſt have been (horrid to imagination) of his contrivance, and inforced by his commands*: and theſe commands attended with an abſolute neceſſity; which nothing can reſiſt. At the ſame time we are told, if any faith may be placed in the holy ſcriptures, that God deteſts vice, and that ſin is his abomination. The whole tendency of the ſacred writings is to recommend virtue; and to diſcountenance wickedneſs. *The Lord,* ſays the Pſalmiſt, *will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.* v. 6. *Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.* Prov. xii. 22. *Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips, that they ſpeak no guile.* Pſalm xxxiv. 13.

* As the ſame arguments are renewed continually, I am obliged both here and in other places to repeat my anſwers. This may appear in ſome degree tireſome: but it could not well be avoided.

Seek

Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live. Amos v. 14. *Follow not that, which is evil: but that, which is good.* 3 John. ver. 11. Exhortations of this ſort are in great number: and theſe are alſo backed with poſitive laws, in order to keep people in a ſtate of virtue and godlineſs. And when a better diſpenſation took place, the will of the all-righteous God was more fully made known; and the reaſonable ſervice, the ſacrifice of the will, enjoined: and not only outward ſanctity, but the inward purity of the mind recommended and enforced. But to what purpoſe were theſe different diſpenſations, if there were prior decrees of a contrary tendency, by which mankind was irreſiſtibly tied down? And how inconſiſtent muſt it appear, and even impoſſible for the ſame benevolent God, who enjoins holineſs, to be, as you would perſuade us, the author of all evil! And what a paradox it is to have thoſe ſalutary leſſons for our conduct adminiſtered, if after all we are under a prior influence and deprived of all choice! You may ſay, that you have in ſo many words allowed men the liberty of chooſing. You have ſo in one page; and, as I have before obſerved, you have laboured to make it void in every other part of your

treatiſe. And you have unluckily taken away all opportunity of any ſubterfuge, by aſſerting, that between liberty and neceſſity *there is no medium*. You therefore ſet aſide all liberty, and reduce men to an abſolute and unavoidable neceſſity. And this neceſſity according to your ſyſtem is derived from the Deity: who by his unalterable decrees has ordained every thing which is bad and corrupt: every ſpecies of abomination and ſin. This you inſiſt on, though you are told by the Prophet and Evangeliſts, that he is a God of righteouſneſs and holineſs: that he is alſo eminently good; ſo that *there is none good but one, that is God.* Matt. xix. 17. The ſame Deity from whom you ſuppoſe all diſcord and violence to have proceeded, is called *the God of love and peace.* 2 Cor. xiii. 11. and the very *God of peace.* Heb. xiii. 20. We may therefore be aſſured, that none of theſe horrid qualities could be derived from him. *God is light, and in him is no darkneſs.* 1 John i. 5. Theſe things, Sir, I have thought proper to lay before you: that you may judge, whether the *ſufferance* of evil be as bad as *cauſing* it: and whether a permit be the ſame as a performance. I ſhall add no more, but only conclude with the words of the

Apoſtle,

Apoſtle, *Let God be true, and every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mighteſt be juſtified in thy ſayings, and mighteſt overcome, when thou art judged.* Romans iii. 4.

SECTION XI.

HAVING hitherto proſecuted your ſyſtem in theory, you try at laſt to confirm it by divine authority; and accordingly you attempt to ſhew us—*How far the Scriptures are favourable to the doctrine of Neceſſity.* p. 129. Should there poſſibly be found one or two texts, which might ſeem to favour your notion; yet they would amount to little, when oppoſed to the whole tenour of the ſacred writings; which contain a very different doctrine. So far from being determined from the beginning by any foreign influence, we are commanded to make uſe of our reaſon, and to look up to God for his aſſiſtance and direction. And if we will not make a good uſe of the faculties beſtowed upon us; nor ſeek that heavenly influence, by which we may be led to the truth; we are given up to our own depraved will, and the iniquity of our hearts. All this plainly proves, when good and evil are laid

laid before us, that we are at full liberty to chooſe the one and to eſchew the other: nor can we have been under any previous neceſſity; nor have had our purpoſes determined beforehand by any abſolute decrees: for then we ſhould be paſt amendment; and all change impoſſible: whereas we pray for a renewal of ſpirit, and for the grace of God to effect it: which grace is a ſubſequent gift; and depends upon our wiſhes and prayers. Supplications, and pious wiſhes, of this kind are enjoined to all: but they would be unneceſſary and preposterous, if every thing antecedently were determined concerning us. The freewill-offering, ſo acceptable to the Deity, is rendered void by the ſuppoſing of any prior and irreſiſtible reſtraint upon the mind and underſtanding. At the ſame time we well know, and acknowledge, that God does not leave the world to itſelf: but continually interferes with a paternal care; and occaſionally directs, enforces, alters, and reſtrains, as ſeemeth beſt to his Divine Wiſdom. His Providence is over all his works; and by this ſuperintendance the whole is ultimately carried on, to the completion of thoſe great purpoſes, for which it was intended. You, Sir, inſiſt, upon previous abſolute decrees: and

that

that the world is directed by an uncontrolled neceſſity: In conſequence of which you quote many paſſages from the ſacred writings, as if they confirmed thoſe doctrines. But they manifeſtly relate to the Providence of God: and to the ſubſequent bleſſings of Grace to thoſe, who try by juſt means to obtain them. Alſo to the judicial blindneſs and infatuation, which is threatened to the rebellious; and to all, who wilfully miſapply the gifts, with which they have been favoured. *For to every one, that hath, ſhall be given; and he ſhall have abundance: but from him that hath not, ſhall be taken away, even that which he hath.* Matt. xxv. 29. But let us ſee the quotations, of which you are pleaſed to avail yourſelf: that we may judge how far they are ſerviceable to your ſyſtem,

Deut. xxx. 6. *And the Lord thy God will circumciſe thy heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, that thou mayeſt live.*

Jerem. xxiv. 7. *And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they ſhall be my people, and I will be their God; and they ſhall turn unto me with their whole heart.*

Jerem.

Jerem. xxxii. 39. *And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them. I will put my fear in their heart, and they shall not depart from me.*

Ezek. xi. 19. *And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new ſpirit within you; and I will take the ſtony heart out of your fleſh.*

Ezek. xxxvi. 26. *And I will put my ſpirit in you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes; and ye ſhall keep my ſtatutes and do them.*

It is ſaid of Lydia (Acts xvi. 14.) *whoſe heart the Lord opened, that ſhe attended to the things that were ſpoken of Paul.*

With reſpect to the reception of the Goſpel, our Saviour ſays (John vi. 37. &c.) *All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me. No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath ſent me, draw him. And again,—No man can come unto me, except it be given to him of the Father.*

To the ſame purpoſe the Apoſtle St. Paul ſays (1. Cor. iii. 6. &c.) *I have planted and Apollos watered,*

watered, but God gave the increaſe: ſo that neither is he, that planted, any thing; neither he, that watered, but God that gave the increaſe. He alſo ſays (Phil. i. 6.) *Being confident of this one thing, that he, who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jeſus Chriſt.* ii. 12. 13. *Work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling; for it is God, that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his own pleaſure. We find the ſame ſentiment in Jude,* ver. 24. *Now unto him, that is able to keep you from falling and to preſent you faultleſs before the coming of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wiſe God, and our Saviour, be glory and majeſty,* &c. To theſe you add the following obſervations, *viz. All prayers for good diſpoſitions go upon the ſame principles, and theſe are frequent in the Scriptures. Thus Solomon, at the ſolemn dedication of the temple, prays in the following manner* (1 Chron. xxix. 18.) *O Lord God of Abraham, of Iſaac, and Jacob, keep this for ever in imagination of the thoughts of the hearts of thy people, and prepare their hearts unto thee. David ſays,* (Pſ. li. 10.) *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me. The Apoſtle Paul prays to the ſame purpoſe.* (Rom. xv. 13.) *Now the God of hope fill you with all hope and*

joy

joy in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghoſt. Epheſ. iii. 16. *That he may grant you according to the riches of his glory to be ſtrengthened with might by his ſpirit in the inner man; that Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you being rooted and grounded in love,* &c. 1 Theſſ. v. 23. *And the very God of peace ſanctify you wholly.* Heb. xii. 20. *Now the God of all peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will: working in you, that which is well pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt.* Such are the texts of Scripture, which you have brought in ſupport of your ſyſtem: but all, that can be learned from them, is, that God ſuperintends all things, like a wiſe governour: and, as we are through the imbecillity of our nature incapable of acting up to the dignity of our calling, that he is ever graciouſly ready to aſſiſt thoſe, that call upon him, with his ſaving grace: and that if we will but exert ourſelves, and try to merit his aſſiſtance, what we cannot of ourſelves perform ſhall be compleated in us by the influence of his Holy Spirit. All this is promiſed upon certain terms: and all that was promiſed to the children of Iſrael through Moſes was conditional; in conſequence

quence of a covenant eſtabliſhed, and of their faithfully performing their part. But in theſe promiſes, and in theſe communications of divine favour, there is not the leaſt hint of any abſolute neceſſity, nor eternal decrees: There is no law of nature nor irreſiſtible influence mentioned as operating from the beginning of time: but quite the contrary. An influence is promiſed; but conditional. It is ſubſequent to the promiſe made; and liable to be forfeited; if thoſe, to whom it is tendered, do not labour to deſerve it. And theſe perſons, ſo far from being fixed in their principles, and determined by any foreign power, are left to their free option, to accept, or to refuſe, the overtures made unto them. And as God in the abundance of his mercy and goodneſs promiſed to further all thoſe who looked up to him, and uſed their beſt endeavours to pleaſe him; ſo he threatened all thoſe, who were diſobedient and apoſtates, with the loſs of his favour, and the withholding of his Holy Spirit. And he farther aſſured all ſuch, that he would not only withdraw his kind influence; but if they perſiſted to be fooliſh, he would add to their folly: if they were wilfully blind, he would encreaſe their darkneſs, and bring a judicial

dicial blindneſs upon them. Were any of an obdurate, cruel, and relentleſs heart, proof againſt all conviction; he would harden that heart farther, and urge them on to the ruin, which they were ſeeking. In ſhort it is the purpoſe of the Almighty, as there is evil in the world, to continually counteract the miſchief, and by his divine wiſdom to bring good out of evil. And if any perſons are ſo unhappily depraved, as to render themſelves uſeleſs members in the world, wherein they are converſant; it often ſeems good to the Deity to add to their infatuation, and render them ultimately uſeful, by making them objects of divine vengeance. For this is a leſſon continually intimated in the ſacred writings, *that from him, that hath not, ſhall be taken, even that which he hath.* And as every thing was from the beginning known to the all-wiſe God, he with his infinite wiſdom ſuperintends the whole, and manages it, not by any neceſſity, nor by abſolute decrees, but by ſuffering perſons to employ their faculties, and by remedying that evil, which muſt be the reſult of freedom. For evil muſt ariſe among beings, which are in their nature frail and imperfect. None of which evil will be laid to their charge, if they labour for improvement,

provement, and look up to heaven for aſſiſtance: and above all if they confeſs their imbecillity: and ſue for pardon through the merits of their Redeemer. Whatever therefore occurs in ſcripture concerning judicial blindneſs, and God's appointment of things in the world, relates not to any arbitrary and original *decree*, but to the occaſional interpoſition of the Deity. Thus Joſeph ſays to his brethren. (Gen. xiv. 5.) *Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourſelves; that ye ſold me hither; for God did ſend me before you to preſerve life.* And again (ver. 8.) *It was not you that ſent me hither but God.*

(Exod. vi. 21.) The Deity ſays of Pharaoh, *I will harden his heart, that he ſhall not let the people go.*

(Joſ. xi. 20.) It is ſaid of the Canaanites. *It was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they ſhould come againſt Iſrael to battle; that he might deſtroy them utterly.*

(Judges ix. 23.) *And God ſent an evil ſpirit betwixt Abimelech and the men of Shechem: and*

the men of Shechem dwelt treacherouſly with Abimelech.

(1 Sam. ii. 25.) *They* (the ſons of Eli) *hearkened not to the voice of their father, becauſe the Lord would ſlay them.*

(2 Chron. xviii. 20. 21.) *God permitted a lying ſpirit into the mouth of his (Ahab's) prophets in order to deceive him.*

(Matt. xi. 25.) *At that time Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes. Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight.*

In all theſe paſſages, and others, which you quote, we may perceive that there was a portion of light, to which particular people were not entitled: that the ſons of folly and rebellion were condemned to be doubly infatuated: and that God continually interpoſed to preſerve his church; and to confirm in their faith all ſuch, as were devoted to his ſervice. He made all evil ſubſervient to this great purpoſe; turning it continually to advantage. This was effected by expoſing the weakneſs

weakneſs of worldly wiſdom: by bringing upon his enemies illuſions; and by enhancing their infatuation, by way of example to others. You take notice of the death of our Saviour being decreed: and very truly. (Acts ii. 23.) *Him being delivered by the determined counſel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken; and with wicked hands have crucified and ſlain.* When God by his wonderful preſcience foreſaw the falling off of mankind, he determined to counteract the evil by ſending his Son into the world. So that every thing, which the Saviour of mankind ſuffered, was both foreknown, and determined by the Deity. But this was particular: and we muſt not argue from this inſtance of wiſdom and goodneſs, that all mankind is under a blind neceſſity: nor conclude, becauſe the Deity had determined to remedy the evil of the world; that therefore he was the Author of all evil. In reſpect to mankind we know how they have been at all times invited to happineſs. We read continually of prophets and holy men being ſent to them, to remonſtrate, to teach, and to perſuade them, that they might change their way of life, and turn from iniquity. How can we ſuppoſe perſons to be under an abſolute neceſſity, who are

liable to be perſuaded: or from a poſſibility of change infer that they are already determined? You, Sir, in one place make mention of the Providence of God: and you ſay, that *a perſon, who ſees in a ſtrong light the doctrine of divine providence, cannot avoid ſpeaking like a Neceſſarian upon the ſubject.* p. 130. The providence of the Deity appears to me not only plainly to be diſcovered through the whole proceſs of the ſcriptures: but to be experimentally known. So far however from leading me to be a Neceſſarian, it ſeems to be in every reſpect repugnant to that doctrine. For what are we to underſtand by the term providence of God, but his wiſdom continually exerted, and his power employed, for the conſervation of the world, which he has created. By his divine interpoſition all things are upheld: and the purpoſes of man are furthered, ſuſpended, or altered, according to his pleaſure. But this interfering of the Deity is quite oppoſite to the doctrine of abſolute decrees: and to your notion of an original impulſe, and that *nothing could have been otherwiſe, than it has been, is, or is to be.* In ancient times we find, as has been before mentioned, that God was pleaſed to ſend prophets and holy men to

perſuade

perſuade his people to turn from their evil ways: which ſhews, that they were at liberty to chooſe: and that there was a poſſibility for thoſe, who rejected the truth, to have accepted the offers made. Hence it is impoſſible for them to have been predetermined by any foreign influence, ſuch as you have ſuppoſed. You are too ſagacious, Sir, not to ſee, that this quite ruins your ſyſtem. When therefore you have mentioned the providence of God in one page, you ſeem to ſet it aſide in the next. p. 131. In this you go great lengths. The interpoſition of the Deity mentioned in the Old and New Teſtament is not by you uniformly allowed. You aver boldly, that many particular events—*ſaid expreſsly* to have been *appointed by God*, were not appointed by him: and even the perſons, who have been repreſented as *inſpired by God*, were not under any divine influence. p. 151. And you add in confirmation of what you have ſaid, that in the inſtances, whatever they may be, to which you allude, there appears from the circumſtances of the hiſtory to have been *no proper interpoſition of the Divine Being: no real miracle: but every thing took place according to the common eſtabliſhed courſe of nature.* p. 131. As this is ſomewhat ex-

 traordinary,

traordinary, it is a pity that you did not illuſtrate what you maintain by ſome examples. What you may mean by there being no *proper* interpoſition, I know not. We have before us an alternative, which admits of no medium. The Deity either does interpoſe or he does not. Therefore if you are true to your principles you ſhould ſpeak out, and maintain without equivocation, that God does not at all interfere in the world: in other words, that there is no Providence. You proceed farther to intimate, that there is no ſecret influence of God's Holy Spirit; though it be a gift continually ſpoken of in the ſcriptures; and promiſed to the faithful as one of the greateſt bleſſings. You accordingly tell us that *the good deſigns and actions of men are in the ſcriptures frequently aſcribed to God; though there be no reaſon from the circumſtances of the facts to ſuppoſe, that there was any ſupernatural influence upon their minds; but that they acted as well-diſpoſed perſons would naturally do in their ſituation.* p. 132. Though you ſpeak with limitation, yet I think it is too plain, that you would ſet aſide all occaſional interpoſition of the Deity; all influence of the Holy Spirit in conſequence of humiliation, repentance, and earneſt prayer: and reſolve every

every thing into an antecedent neceſſity, which renders the interfering of the Deity afterwards unneceſſary and inconſiſtent. You aſcribe indeed all things to God: but ſuppoſe them to be determined, and, if I underſtand you right, irrevocably fixed from all eternity. You are pleaſed to ſay farther, that *good men in the ſcriptures frequently aſcribe their good works to God as the proper author of them; the giver of every good and perfect gift: and are the furtheſt in the world from having the leaſt idea of their having any merit, or claim upon God in conſequence of it: which upon the doctrine of philoſophical free-will, they really have.* p. 133. You write, Sir, with ſo much reſerve: and your words are ſo guarded, that I am not always ſure, that I arrive at your true meaning. When you ſpeak of *philoſophical free-will*, I preſume you mean free-will abſolute: for I know not of any different ſorts of free-will; nor of any limitations or degrees. And in reſpect to what you urge, that men would from hence be entitled to *merit*, and that they would have *a claim* upon the Deity, I cannot ſee any ſuch conſequence, that can be derived from it. The caſe has always appeared to me to be this. We have good and evil, life and death, placed

before us: and we are at full liberty to make our option. Thoſe, who make a right uſe of their reaſon, and who have the fear of God before their eyes, will not fail to make a proper choice. But when this option is made, ſuch is the imbecillity of their nature, that they cannot act up to their wiſhes: they are continually liable to fall away; and ruin their own good purpoſes. On this account, they are told to look up to heaven, and implore the divine aſſiſtance: that if they will but exert themſelves and ſhew themſelves zealous of good works, they ſhall be furthered in all that is good: and what they cannot of themſelves effect, ſhall be brought to perfection through the influence of the Holy Spirit. This is the whole: and when this is done, they have the ſame claim upon the Deity, as a beggar has upon a Prince, who has given him leave to aſk: and afterwards granted him his charity.

You are pleaſed however to perſiſt in your opinion, that our wills and inclinations were from the beginning determined: and you have been at great pains to produce inſtances from the ſacred writers to countenance this doctrine. Some of theſe are from the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts;

geliſts: which however appear to me, as I have ſhewn, to have nothing to your purpoſe. And indeed you ſeem in reality to acknowledge it: and though you ſpeak with your uſual caution and reſerve; yet you afford us too plainly an indication of your real opinion of thoſe writers, to whom you pretended that you had been ſo much beholden. Your words are very remarkable. *Not that I think the ſacred writers were, ſtrictly ſpeaking, Neceſſarians; for they were not Philoſophers: but their habitual devotion naturally led them to refer all things to God without reflecting on the rigorous meaning of their language; and very probably, had they been interrogated upon the ſubject, they would have appeared not to be apprized of the proper extent of the Neceſſarian ſcheme; and would have anſwered in a manner unfavourable to it.* p. 133. Who muſt not after this pity the fate of the poor Apoſtles and Evangeliſts? Alas, Sir, how very low muſt they be in your eſtimation! They, who for ages were thought to have been inſpired, and to have been peculiarly directed by the Spirit of truth, are at laſt ſuppoſed not to underſtand their own meaning. They were not, you ſay, ſtrictly ſpeaking, *Neceſſarians*. No, in good truth, Sir, nor were they in any reſpect

reſpect of that denomination. They were not, you ſay, *Philoſophers*. It is true, Sir, they might not underſtand the doctrine of fixed air: nor had they ever made any diſcoveries in electricity. To the ſquaring of the circle they were probably utterly ſtrangers. Yet believe me, Sir, they were great Philoſophers. And however you may rate yourſelf above them, they were far your ſuperiors in true knowledge. They were bleſt above others with rational philoſophy, and likewiſe with a philoſophy, to which reaſon could not poſſibly arrive: and which could only be obtained from the fountain of all wiſdom. This they had in full plenitude: and the whole of our religion, and of our happineſs in conſequence of it, depends upon the teſtimony of theſe Apoſtles, whom you thus vilify and debaſe. Such were theſe lights of the world, theſe preachers of divine truth: who, it ſeems, if they had been interrogated by Dr. Prieſtly, would not have been able to have given him a proper anſwer.

SECTION XII.

AS you have mentioned the *philoſophical* doctrine of Free-will, ſo you here introduce the *philoſophical* doctrine of Neceſſity. And this chapter contains an account of the Calviniſtic doctrine of Predeſtination compared with the philoſophical doctrine of Neceſſity. Of the former you give an unfavourable repreſentation: and ſhew the fatal conſequences, which reſult from this opinion. But after all, your principles are the ſame: though you form different concluſions. You are both abſolute Predeſtinarians; however you may differ in inference and deduction. It is your opinion, that of mankind all will be ſaved: Mr. Toplady aſſerts that many will be ſaved: the rigid Calviniſts, that there will be very few. But this is all ſurmiſe; and ariſes from the pride of human reaſon, which will determine, though there may be no grounds for determination. Theſe notions do not affect the article of Predeſtination, which you all maintain alike: though you on your part would fain make a diſtinction. The Calviniſts, you tell us, differ from you in this: their *ſyſtem intirely excludes*

excludes the popular notion of free-will, viz. the liberty or power of doing, what we pleaſe, virtuous, or vicious, as belonging to every perſon in every ſituation: which is perfectly conſiſtent with the doctrine of philoſophical Neceſſity; and indeed reſults from it. p. 158. If, as you here ſay, *liberty* be conſiſtent with your ſyſtem, how came you at any time to give it up, and to make void in one place, what you maintain in another? Be pleaſed, Sir, to attend to your own words, which I have been obliged more than once to allude to. *I was not, however, a ready convert to the doctrine of Neceſſity.—I gave up my liberty with great reluctance; and in a long correſpondence, which I once had upon the ſubject, I maintained very ſtrenuouſly the doctrine of Liberty*—(Preface p. xxxi.) but it ſeems you finally renounced it: and all through your treatiſe have been arguing for an abſolute Neceſſity. How this is conſiſtent with what you maintain here, I know not: or with that, which you elſewhere inſiſt upon through an hundred and thirty pages. You, like all other Predeſtinarians, hold that every thing has been ordained from the beginning; and is enforced by an irreſiſtible influence, ſo that nothing could have been otherwiſe, than it has been.

been. You afterwards ſpeak of the diſpoſition of man, and the tendency of his mind: upon which you make your ſuppoſed liberty to depend. (p. 64.) But how comes it, when all things were antecedently determined, that the diſpoſition of man ſhould have been left free? When all our actions, and all our thoughts, were under a previous irreſiſtible influence: when neither our good works, nor our evil, originate in ourſelves; when all our inclinations are biaſſed and even forced; how is it poſſible for the diſpoſition to enjoy this freedom? The world, I fear, Sir, will hardly think you ſincere in theſe your opinions. For it is certain, that what you grant in one place, you make void in another.

You ſuppoſe throughout, that there has been an uninterupted chain of cauſes and effects: and that the foreknowledge of the Deity ariſes from hence, and from hence only. And, as all events are open to his view, that he judges from hence concerning things to come; and has no other means of judging. You proceed farther upon theſe premiſes, and infer, that as the Deity foreſees things, which happen, they therefore could not be otherwiſe, than they always are, and upon this you found your doctrine of Neceſſity:

Neceſſity: as if, had things happened otherwiſe, they would not have been equally foreſeen by the Deity. Hence it is, that like other Predeſtinarians, you are led to ſuppoſe an unavoidable and uncontrollable influence over all our thoughts and actions. But as I have repeatedly ſaid, Foreknowledge has no more influence over what is to come, than retroſpect has upon what is paſt; or immediate intuition on that, which is before us. Yet upon this you found your Neceſſity, and think it a new diſcovery. But it is the ſame as the Fate of the Stoics; which has been canvaſſed for ages. They maintained the ſame chain of cauſes and effects: from whence they deduced their doctrine both of Neceſſity and Fate. In this they were not uniform: but each explained his notions according to his own fancy, and as arguments aroſe, which ſeemed to accord to his favourite ſyſtem. The Philoſopher Heraclitus held, that all things were ordered by an inevitable impulſe; which he termed αναγκη and ειμαρμενη, *Neceſſity and Fate.* Others ſeparated theſe two, and diſtinguiſhed between them: maintaining, that the will and the actions of men, were determined only by ειμαρμενη, Fate. Αναγκη, *Neceſſity,* was a blind, inevitable, and overbearing

overbearing power, not always admitted; but ειμαρμενη, Fate, conſiſted of *a ſeries and combination of cauſes* by appointment: συμπλοκην αιτιων τεταγμενην; and by this all human affairs were ſuppoſed to be determined. Plutarch de Plac. Philoſ. l. i. c. xxix. p. 885. Cicero ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe. Fatum autem id appello, quod Græci ειμαρμενην: id eſt, ordinem ſeriemque cauſarum; cum cauſæ cauſa nexa rem ex ſe gignat. Ea eſt ex omni æternitate fluens veritas ſempiterna. De Divinatione. The ſame was the opinion of Chryſippus the Stoic. Fatum eſt, inquit, ſempiterna quædam et indeclinabilis ſeries rerum, et catena volvens ſemetipſa ſeſe, et implicans per æternas conſequentiæ ordines, &c. A. Gell. l. vi. c. 2. p. 364.

But the antients were not unanimous in their opinions upon this head. They not only doubted from whence the neceſſity ſpoken of proceeded; but they alſo varied about the extent and influence of fate. It was apparent that ſo much evil as well as inconſiſtency aroſe from it, that they were, many of them, at laſt obliged to compromiſe matters, and to allow, that though ſome things were directed

by a ſuperiour influence; yet that others were left to the free will of man.—ὡϛε τα μεν ειμαρθαι, ταδε ανειμαρθαι. Plut. ibid. *So that ſome things were ſubject to Fate; but others not ſo.* You, Sir, are pleaſed to go beyond theſe Philoſophers upon their own principles: and inſiſt upon an univerſal and abſolute neceſſity. Had the ſages above partaken of the ſalutary light, which we now enjoy, their Fate would probably have amounted to no more, than the order and inſtitution of things, and the general interpoſition of Providence, by which the world is ſuperintended: and by which we are occaſionally directed. The Stoic Boethus acknowledged, like others, a ſeries of cauſes, which he termed Fate: yet he ſeems to have meant little more by it, than the *common courſe and order of nature.* Εϛι δε ειμαρμενη αιτια των οντων ειρομενη, καθ' ὁν ὁ κοσμος διεξαγεται. *Fate is a ſeries of cauſes, connected as it were by a chain; in other words, that reaſon and influence, by which the world is carried on.* Diog. Laert. Zeno. p. 459. This is the purport of the words, when explained. Chryſippus ſeems to have been of the ſame opinion: for he was againſt *Neceſſity*, though he argued for *Fate.* He maintained—Ειμαρμενην ειναι φυσικην συνταξιν των ὁλων: *that Fate was nothing*

nothing but the natural connection of things in the univerſe. A. Gellius ſupra. Stobæus, ſpeaking of the Stoical tenets, ſeems to define it expreſsly to be the ſuperintendence of God. Λογον των εν τω κοσμῳ προνοια διοικημενων. *The eſtabliſhed reaſon and order, by which through Providence the things of the world are governed.* Stobæi Phyſic.

You are therefore in ſome degree miſtaken, when you affirm, *that what the ancients have ſaid on the ſubject is altogether foreign to the purpoſe: their Fate being quite a different thing from the Neceſſity of the moderns. For though they had an idea of the certainty of the final events of ſome things, they had no idea of the neceſſary connection of all the preceding means to bring about the deſigned end; and leaſt of all, had they any juſt idea, of the mechaniſm of the mind, depending upon the certain influence of motives to determine the will; by means of which the whole ſeries of events, from the beginning of the world to the conſummation of all things, makes one connected chain of cauſes and effects*, &c. &c. Preface. p. xxv. It is ſeen from the quotations above, that their *Fate* was deduced from the ſame principles, on which you found your doctrine

of *Neceſſity*. Both depend upon a long chain of cauſes expreſsly ſo mentioned: ſo that your ſyſtem is far from having in it any thing new. Only thus much is to be obſerved, that the more moderate of the Philoſophers of old, and among the reſt Chryſippus, did not carry their opinions to the ſame length, as you have done. For however you may extenuate in ſome places, what you have ſaid; yet you inſiſt upon *abſolute neceſſity*. p. 18: and that *no event could have been otherwiſe, than it has been, is, or is to be*. p. 8. Some of the wiſeſt among the ancients thought the arguments, drawn from a ſuppoſed chain of events, to be equivocal and dangerous, as they deprived people of free will, and led many to deſperation. Among theſe was Cicero. *Qui introducunt cauſarum ſeriem ſempiternam, ii mentem hominum neceſſitate devinciunt*. Cicero de Fato. p. 1283. He farther mentions that Chryſippus had ſo embarraſſed himſelf by his ſyſtem of cauſes and effects, that he could not well clear himſelf of the dangerous conſequences, which followed; and which he diſavowed. *Chryſippus autem cum et neceſſitatem improbaret, et nihil vellet ſine præpoſitis cauſis evenire, cauſarum genera diſtinguit, ut et neceſſitatem effugiat, et retineat* Fatum. Ibid.

This

This very learned and acute Philoſopher makes the following concluſion; wherein he determines the controverſy between Chryſippus, and thoſe, who oppoſed him. *Omninoque, cum hæc ſit diſtinctio, ut in quibuſdam rebus vere dici poſſit, cum hæ cauſæ antegreſſæ ſint, non eſſe in noſtrâ poteſtate, quin illæ eveniant, quorum cauſæ fuerint: quibuſdam autem in rebus, cauſis antegreſſis, in noſtrâ tamen eſſe poteſtate, ut aliud aliter eveniat: hanc diſtinctionem utrique approbant.* Ibid. p. 1284. From hence, I think, we may have the opinion of Cicero, who allows, that there are ſome cauſes, which in the courſe of things muſt inevitably take place. But there are other cauſes, whoſe influence and tendency may be oppoſed and ſurmounted, ſo that contrary to your notion, a thing, which at any time happened, *might have happened otherwiſe*, if we had choſen it. By theſe means the will is left free; and the mind quite at liberty in reſpect to Neceſſity and Fate.

From the above you will ſee, Sir, that your opinion is by no means new: but has been long ago canvaſſed, and confuted, You ſay, that in the proſecution of your ſyſtem, you have been led chiefly by Collins, Hume, and

Hobbes. What chain of cauſes was it, what fatal neceſſity, that linked you with this inglorious triumvirate? For however high you, and ſome others, may rate theſe writers: yet, whoever abuſes his talents, and writes with an ill deſign, is in my eye inglorious. And I am ſorry to ſay, that there was no neceſſity in the caſe, nor any abſolute decree, which forced you into this aſſociation. It was quite a voluntary act: and we may too plainly perceive, that a conformity of opinion, and an approbation of their doctrines, led you to a union with theſe perſons. This has been a great misfortune: for the world would have been glad to have found Dr. Prieſtly in better company.

There is a paſſage, Sir, as far back, as your dedication, which I ſhould be unwilling to paſs by unnoticed. It is where you are ſpeaking of your principles, and have the following words. *In theſe principles alone do we find a perfect coincidence between true religion and philoſophy; and by the help of the latter, we are able to demonſtrate the excellence of the moral precepts of the former.* p. xv. This is paying a poor compliment to the ſacred writings, and to the precepts contained in them, to think, they

ſtand in need of any ſuch feeble ſupport. Beſides it is inverting the order of things: for the philoſophy of the world ſhould be tried by the Scriptures: and not the Scriptures by the opinions of men: unleſs you give up a material article; and will not allow the Scriptures to be the word of God. Ill has it always fared with religion, when the morality and doctrines of the ſacred writings have been modelled and interpreted according to the faſhion of the world, and the opinions of conceited men, falſly called philoſophy. I am ſenſible, that genuine philoſophy cannot be repugnant to the Scriptures: but where is it to be found? Oftentimes what is ſtiled philoſophy to-day, is abſurdity to-morrow: yet we would fain warp the Scriptures, and level them to our own capacity: and call this *demonſtration*. This mode of illuſtration began very early; and was carried on by Juſtin and Clemens, and ſo on by other of the Fathers to the time of Origen. It has at intervals been revived, and brought down to the preſent times. But though there have been advantages of much conſequence accruing from the ſtore of learning introduced by theſe means, yet religion itſelf has often been hurt by it. Many have engaged themſelves in this

purſuit

purſuit with a good intent: but we have reaſon to fear, that others have made uſe of theſe foreign helps with an evil deſign; that they might corrupt by a ſeeming improvement; and ruin by affecting to eſtabliſh. This, Sir, I truſt, is not the caſe with you: though I admire, that you did not ſee the fatal conſequences of your ſyſtem. You take notice of ſeveral perſons of note, who have written more or leſs on the ſame ſubject; yet they have none of them in your opinion been preciſely in the right. Mr. Locke is greatly miſtaken: Pref. p. xxix. Mr. Edwards is not always to the purpoſe: p. 122. Mr. Hobbes fails *in his ſolution of the difficulty:* p. 118. And laſtly Mr. Hume, p. 118. *intirely abandons the doctrine of Neceſſity to the moſt immoral and ſhocking conſequences.* I ſhould have thought, that the lapſes of theſe perſons might fortunately have led you to have ſuſpected your own ſtrength; and rendered you leſs ſanguine and determinate. As to the conſequences from Mr. Hume's ſtating of the caſe, which appear ſo immoral and ſhocking; the very ſame ariſe from your own principles, however you may try to evade them. You may ſhift your ground, and endeavour to ſhake them off: but they

ſtick

ſtick like the ſhirt of Hercules: and attend you, wherever you go. You mention the diſpoſition of man, as an expedient to qualify matters: and ſpeak of the ultimate and intention, when a train of evils are introduced. But this will not prove a ſatisfactory anſwer to the Sceptic and Atheiſt. They will hardly think, that by this ſubterfuge you get rid of the difficulty, when the old demand is made—*Πόθεν το κακον*. You will not perſuade them, nor indeed any reaſonable perſon, that good and evil depend upon *intention*; and that any purpoſe of the agent can make them change their nature. You will have many objections ſtill made: and many perplexing queſtions aſked. Of ſome I have already taken notice: particularly of thoſe introduced by Mr. Hume; as you quote him. To theſe you have given no ſatisfactory anſwer; nor can you upon your principles: though the difficulty may be, and I truſt, has been ſatisfactorily ſolved. The ſame ſhocking conſequences, which he draws from the doctrine of Neceſſity, muſt neceſſarily follow from your ſyſtem: which indeed is the very ſame, which he has embraced, and which he boldly defends. It is in vain to talk of the diſpoſition of man; and the intention, when

evil

evil is created. Theſe expedients are of little weight. According to your ſyſtem, evil is ſuppoſed to be neceſſary and unavoidable. Is it not then more rational to refer what is called moral evil to the abuſe of liberty in man; than to the all-wiſe and all-powerful Deity, the Father of all purity and goodneſs? That there is a falling off we both allow: but we differ in the cauſe. By me it is imputed to man, and to the abuſe of his powers: By you, to that God, who is all perfection, who ſpeaks of it as an abomination: and denounces his vengeance againſt it.

THE END.